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Managing Human Service Organizations

Christian Jacobsson

Introduction

The core issue in all organizations is to coordinate individual behavior on all levels in order to reach one or more common goals. This can be done indirectly through strategy and structure for the organization or directly by, for instance, leadership and incentives that affect individuals' ways of working. Organizational goals, strategies, structures and individuals' behavior contributing to organizational performance are the parts that, appropriately linked, together have a major influence on organizational effectiveness. This thesis addresses the topic of management in human service organizations (HSO) (Hasenfeld, 1983), including managing strategy, structure and individual behavior. The organizations in focus are hospitals, schools and social service agencies. A basic assumption is that human services are organizations that mostly share the features of modern organizations in general, but also confront special demands and prerequisites that make them partly different from other types of organizations. According to Hasenfeld (1983), human services are distinguished from other types of organizations by two key characteristics: they work directly with and on people whose attributes they attempt to shape and they are mandated to protect and promote the welfare of the people they serve. Both organizational management, in general, and the managing of human services, specifically, will be considered throughout this introduction.

Traditionally, there is a "top-down" relationship between the parts in the ideal chain of relationships from organizational goals to performance. Organizational strategies are, by definition, different ways of attaining organizational goals and in that sense "goal demand strategy". Further, Chandler (1962) noted in a historical analysis of the survival of organizations that the organizational structure must fit with the organizational strategy for the organization to be effective. In other words, "strategy gives structure" (i.e., structure follows strategy, in Chandler's words). The purpose of creating and maintaining an organizational structure is to influence and regulate the behavior of individual employees (Jacobsen & Thorsvik, 1998); in other words, "structure guides behavior". Lastly, organizational performance is mainly the result of the workers' behavior, thus the final step becomes "behavior creates performance". Thus, from the top to the bottom the chain becomes: "goal demands strategy, strategy gives structure, structure guides behavior and behavior creates performance". This chain serves as a model of thought, mainly to structure

the frame of reference. Certainly, several other factors influence the aspects of organizational life covered here, not least the environment in which the organizations acts. The strategy-structure-behavior chain is presented along with the scope of this thesis in Table 1.

Table 1
Organizational functions covered by the introduction sections.

Organizational functions that are managed * (Shadowed parts are only treated casually)		Section in the introduction
Organizational goals	Determining *what* the organization wants to do	
Strategy	Determining *how* the organization intends to do it	Management by strategy
Structure	Creating the framework of, and relationships among, different tasks in line with the strategy	Management by structure
Individual behavior	Carrying out work in accordance with the assigned tasks	Managing individual behavior
Organizational performance	What the organization accomplishes	

* Inspired by Barney and Griffin (1992)

Organizational Management

This section serves as an introduction to the subject of management in human service organizations, first by describing organizations in general and different views of the management construct, and then by outlining characteristics of human service organizations with regard to management.

Organizations in General

Approximately 40 years ago, theorists like Talcott Parsons (1960) and Amitai Etzioni (1964) formulated the most widely accepted definitions of organization. According to Parsons and Etzioni, organizations are social units deliberately constructed or reconstructed with the purpose of attaining particular goals. Most contemporary organizational scientists define organizations similarly. For instance, Barney and Griffin (1992) define an organization as "a collection of people working together in a coordinated and structured fashion to achieve one or more goals" (p. 5), and organizational goals as "a desired future state that an organization attempts to realize" (p. 181).

Some scientists have, however, proposed definitions of organization without the concept of organizational goals, emphasizing individuals' activities. White (1974) defined organizations as individuals with differential control over resources joined together in a collective for the purpose of sharing these resources to further or fulfil their own personal goals. Goals are included in the definition, but only connected to individual human beings, and it is the allocation of resources and goals among the individuals that is stressed instead. In conclusion, organizations are tools composed of people for goal attainment. Whose goals – the organization's or the individual's – is an open question. Hopefully, these coincide by individuals sharing the same goals or taking responsibility for different aspects of the overall goal. Nonetheless, organizations must be managed in some way or by someone.

Management and Leadership

Management is related closely to leadership. Some writers argue for the necessity to distinguish between the processes of leading and managing, and also between leaders and managers. For instance, Bennis (1989) suggested that managers are people who do things right and leaders are people who do the right thing, implying that managers and leaders are different types of people. Other writers take a contrary view. Kotter (1987) argued that whereas leadership is about coping with change and management is about coping with complexity, both can be exercised by the same person. Van Fleet and Yukl (1986) also emphasized that leaders and managers are the same, although it is possible to be a manager without being a good leader; good managers know how to use leadership to effectively influence employees. As Yukl (1998) recently expressed, defining leading and managing as separate processes may obscure more than it reveals if the processes are not mutually exclusive, and can be effectively integrated. The question is then begged as to what is leadership and what is management.

Bass (1990) stated that there are as many different definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define it. Forsyth (1999) handles the variety of perspectives and definitions of leadership by creating a very broad definition, in which leadership is "a reciprocal, transactional, and sometimes transformational process in which cooperating individuals are permitted to influence and motivate others to promote the attainment of group or individual goals" (p. 343). Further, Yukl (1998) defines leadership as "the process wherein an individual member of a group or organization influences the interpretation of events, the choice of objectives and strategies, the organization of work activities, the motivation of people to achieve the objectives, the maintenance of cooperative

relationships, the development of skills and confidence by members, and the enlistment of support and cooperation from people outside the group or organization" (p. 5).

According to Barney and Griffin (1992), the management process (i.e., the managing of an organization) is "a set of activities directed at combining resources efficiently and effectively in order to attain the organization's goals" (p. 8). Further, managers are those individuals whose primary activities are to carry out the management process. The managerial functions are often described in the literature as planning, organizing, leading and controlling. Following this tradition, Van Fleet (1991) describes the functions as:

- *Planning* is the process of determining where the organization wants to be in the future and the best way to get there.
- *Organizing* is the process of designing jobs, grouping jobs into units, and establishing patterns of authority among jobs and groups.
- *Leading* is the process of getting members of the organization to work together towards the organization's goals.
- *Controlling* is about monitoring the organization's goals and keeping both the organization and its people headed in the right direction.

When comparing the concepts of management and leadership, considerable overlap but also partly different meanings between leading and managing are salient. With Van Fleet's (1991) method of describing managerial functions, managing is a wider concept than leading, since leading is one of four managerial functions. From his perspective, leading concerns the direct personal influence on people by, for instance, communicating a vision and motivating others. Further, leadership requires a leader but management can also be impersonal, regulating behavior by means of goals, organizational structure, norms, formal regulations, work design, work schedules, etc.

Different Aspects of Management

Management can be understood in different ways. According to Furnham (1997), management (and leadership) can be viewed as:

- a high status *group* (a network of elite positions), e.g. the top management team
- a particular focal *person*, e.g. the chief executive officer (CEO) or a supervisor
- a *function* serving a purpose, e.g. the organizational structure or an individual who serves a purpose by directing efforts towards goals

Furnham (1997) also notes that it has always been acknowledged among management scientists that all members of a group are to some extent leaders, though not formal leaders. This view is mostly about management or leadership as a function, whereby different persons can act as leaders for the group from time to time or concerning a particular topic. Thus far, leadership or management is about influencing others, not influencing oneself.

Recently, self-management has caught the attention of many researchers (Drucker, 1999; Frayne, 1991; Spreitzer, Cohen, & Ledford, 1999; Uhl-Bien & Graen, 1998). Self-management is a set of strategies (e.g. goal-setting, monitoring and rewarding) a person uses to influence his or her own behavior (Yukl, 1998). Likewise has empowerment, the process whereby managers aim partly at increasing subordinates' self-management, received much attention (Bolin, 1989; Rice & Schneider, 1994). The 1990's have even been called "the age of empowerment" (Simons, 1995).

Self-management is in no way a new phenomenon. This becomes particularly clear when comparing the concept with related psychological theories on human behavior, especially "control theory" (Carver & Scheier, 1982) and "action theory" (Frese & Zapf, 1994). Both these theories are built on the assumption that behavior is based on "self-regulation", whereby individuals trying to attain goals, monitor the result of their action and adjust their behavior according to the feedback they receive.

In conclusion, management in organizations can be referred to individuals and groups on the one hand, or a function on the other. Management comprises influencing both others and oneself (self-management). The management function can either be filled by persons or be impersonal in the form of structures, work schedules, norms, etc. Thus far, management in general has been dealt with; next we turn to the specific characteristics of human services, affecting management in these organizations.

Human Service Organizations

Human service organizations are a constituent part of modern societies. As noted by Thylefors (1991), the welfare-society is characterized by having organizations that take care of its citizens from birth to death. "The relationships between citizens and the welfare state are mediated by human service organizations, which register and respond to citizens' claims" (Hasenfeld, 1983, p. 2). These organizations have exposed positions and are often targets of debate and criticism. Especially

scrutinized is the complex work carried out within the health care-, social care- and educational systems (Thylefors, 1991). Partly because of the ubiquitous position of human services in society and partly because of the many stakeholders (e.g. political parties and professional organizations) with conflicting interests, these organizations can also be characterized as ambiguous (Jacobsen & Thorsvik, 1998).

Hasenfeld (1983) recognized three types of human service organizations: people processing, people sustaining and people changing. Each of these types is divided into two categories depending on type of clients (normally functioning or malfunctioning). For instance, according to this classification public schools are people changing organizations with (mostly) normally functioning clients, and hospitals and social services are people changing organizations with malfunctioning clients.

There are both similarities and differences between human service organizations and other kinds of organizations (e.g. a private manufacturing organization), according to Hasenfeld (1983). They are similar in that they are contrived, goal-directed, social units that import resources from their environment to produce a specific set of products or services and to maintain themselves. But they are different in a number of ways, according to Hasenfeld (1983). First, the fact that the "raw material" consists of people affects most of the organizational activities. Among other things, there are ethical values involved and every activity must be ethically justified, both with regard to how the professionals assess their clients and how they treat them. Another aspect is that this "raw material" is interactive. With clients as "raw material" in mind, Toffler (1980) described them as "prosumers", a combination of producer and consumer.

Second, Hasenfeld (1983) notes that the goals are vague, ambiguous and complex. Consensus with regard to constructs as welfare or equality might exist on an abstract political level, but are often problematic when this welfare or justice is distributed through the concrete work of human service workers. Furthermore, each interest group attempts to achieve its goals through the human service organization, but no separate group of actors has the legitimate sole right to define the organizations' tasks. This circumstance has brought some writers (Johansson, 1995; Strauss, Schatzman, Bucher, Ehrlich, & Sabshin, 1981), to describe human services as "negotiatory organizations" and Thylefors (1991) to call them "organizations with dispersed power".

Third, Hasenfeld (1983) describes human services as often operating with indeterminate technologies that do not provide complete knowledge of how to obtain desired outcomes. The reason for this is partly that people as "raw materials" are complex and variable. Furthermore, knowledge of how people function and how to change them is incomplete and partially dependent on factors outside the control

of the human service organization. Many of the attributes to be changed are also difficult to observe or measure.

Fourth, the core activities in human services consist of interactions between staff and clients. The nature and quality of staff-client relationships is a crucial determinant of the organization's success or failure, yet the quality of these relationships is not controlled by the organization since it is affected by personal attributes of both staff and client on the one hand, and of situational factors on the other.

Fifth, because of the primacy of staff-client interaction, the position and role of subordinate staff is of particular importance. Numerous legal, ethical, ideological, technical and economic reasons limit the ability of the organization (managers and politicians) to monitor and control these interactions. Therefore, subordinate staff exercises considerable autonomy and discretion. This has led writers to describe human services as, for instance, "street-level bureaucracies" (Lipsky, 1980) or "loosely coupled systems" (Weick, 1976). Lipsky (1980) also notes that not only 'professionals' (e.g., Thylefors, 1991), but also the less educated 'para-professionals' exercise a great deal of autonomy in relation to managers.

Sixth, Hasenfeld (1983) claimed further that human service organizations lack reliable and valid measures of effectiveness, which might contribute to a higher resistance to change and innovation. The ambiguity of goals, indeterminacy of service technologies and difficulties in measuring human attributes contributes to the difficulties in evaluating service outcomes and organizational effectiveness. The deprivation of such feedback enables the organization to reify its claims of success and to reinforce its dominant service ideologies.

An example of an extensive goal, related to Hasenfeld's second characteristic of human services, is offered by Thylefors and Persson's (1994) description of the goals of a Swedish social insurance agency. The Swedish government assigned the organization, to reduce the unhealth rate (average number of sick-leave days) by one percent. The organization's strategy became to enhance cooperation with clients' employers and physicians within the health care system, mainly by informing them about the unhealth target. One of the indicators of success in attaining the unhealth target was that the companies where the clients worked had improved their work environment. Clearly, it is difficult for social insurance workers to influence the work environment at clients' workplaces since they lack the legal authority and power to do so. Related to this example of a goal for a Swedish human service organization is the more general question of how to describe and measure performance in these organizations.

Performance in Human Service Organizations

Stone, Bigelow and Crittenden (1999) noted in their recent review of strategic management in non-profit organizations (mostly human services) that the research conducted during the last 20 years provides additional support regarding the importance of particular characteristics of non-profit organizations, especially concerning their simultaneous dependency on (but lack of control over) external resources and their demand to manage multiple and often conflicting constituencies. The authors raised a question for future research – how shall performance be defined in non-profit organizations? In profit organizations, performance is easier to define (e.g., the amount of profit) but in non-profit organizations the field of possible definitions is wide open. The authors concluded that the complexity of the non-profit environment, and the combination of institutional and technical demands they face, suggests the development of multiple indicators of performance.

An example of a method for implementing this kind of multiple indicators in both profit and non-profit organizations is offered by the approach called "Balanced Scorecard" (Kaplan & Norton, 1992), of which a Swedish application has been described by Olve, Roy and Wetter (1997). The authors describe Balanced Scorecard as a tool for strategic management. The typical performance indicators are: the financial perspective, the client/customer perspective, the production process perspective and the renewal/development perspective. According to the authors, some organizations have added a fifth indicator, the co-worker perspective. The central idea is that the different perspectives, all connected to their measurable indicators of performance, must be in balance as a way to prevent sub-optimizing on behalf of short-term interests. Another aim is to visualize and promote control over the organizational activities.

The Balanced Scorecard approach is based on the ideas of management by objectives, MBO, introduced by Drucker (1954) almost 50 years ago and still acting as an elusive shadow behind 'new' approaches. An aspect of the Balanced Scorecard example worth emphasizing is the co-worker perspective as one part to counter-balance, for instance, the financial perspective. Similar descriptions of applications of MBO in Swedish organizations, focusing partly on co-workers' health and satisfaction as a measure of organizational performance, is offered by Thylefors and colleagues (Jacobsson & Pousette, 1994; Thylefors & Persson, 1994) in their evaluation of a social insurance agency.

In summary, there are many indicators for an overall conclusion that human service organizations are more difficult to manage than other types of organizations. The raw material consists of other people with a will of their own. Managers often lack a clear picture of the core activity, since this is often carried out in a shielded staff-client relationship. Human service workers are therefore granted considerable

autonomy at the cost of manager control. At the same time, there are many stakeholders putting claims on these organizations – what they ought to do and what they accomplish, but no one has the sole right to define their purpose. This situation contributes to the formulation of goals that are often vague, conflicting or very extensive, and also to severity with regard to defining what effective performance is. The formulation of organizational goals and how they will be reached is most often referred to as strategic management.

Management by Strategy

Strategic decision-making and planning is a topic of great importance for organizations. An organizational strategy is a plan for carrying out the mission and attaining strategic goals (Yukl, 1998). According to Hasenfeld (1983), strategy is about shaping the service delivery patterns in the human service organization in order to meet organizational goals. Some of the strategic decisions affect the direction and structure of the organization for 5 to 20 years ahead. This circumstance is related to Jaques' (1979) suggestion that time span of task completion is an objective and significant difference between management jobs at different organizational levels. Jaques suggested that the closer to the top a manager's position is, the longer the time is between the planning of an activity and its completion.

Strategic Decisions and Planning

In their meta-analytical review on strategic planning (mainly in profit organizations), Miller and Cardinal (1994) reported that the conducted research supports the conclusion that strategic planning by top executives improves organizational performance. Moreover, the importance of strategic planning also seems greater as the complexity and ambiguity of the environment surrounding the organization increases. This implies that strategic planning would be particularly important in human services, since they generally are characterized as complex organizations, (e.g., Hasenfeld, 1992). However, Yukl (1998) made an essential remark; most of the conducted research, including Miller and Cardinal's review, is limited to the relationship between strategic planning and organizational performance. Generally, there is a lack of attention to the content of strategies and their organizational implementation. Yukl concludes that formulation of strategies will not improve organization performance unless the strategies have a relevant content, are commu-

nicated to lower-level managers, and these managers become committed to their implementation.

Stone *et al.* (1999), summarized and analyzed 66 empirical studies in their review on strategic management in non-profit organizations (mostly human services) with conclusions similar to Yukl's. They structured the research into the three aspects of the strategic process – strategy formulation, strategy content and strategy implementation. With regard to formulation, they concluded that many organizations had no strategic plans in a formal sense. For those that had, the main result was changes in organizational mission, structure, and board and management roles. With regard to content, the authors concluded that the determinants of strategy are largely driven by characteristics of resource environments and existing financial relationships. Further, little attention has been paid to determinants expressing changing demands for services or shifts in clients' needs. Lastly, little attention has been paid to the implementation of strategic activities and no studies have focused on the implementations' impact on organizational performance. Nutt (1989), for example, examined implementation tactics in 50 non-profit organizations. The conclusion was that most of the managers preferred a low involvement when implementing, for instance, new goals or methods. Further, this lack of direct involvement by managers was a major cause of implementation failure. If the research reflects reality, there seems to be a gap between strategic and operative levels in human service organizations with regard to the loose chain from strategy formulation to implementation on the operative level.

Management by Objectives in Human Services

With a perceived gap between strategic and operative goals in mind, Jacobsson and Pousette (1994) suggested an integrative model for MBO in human service organizations (Figure 1). The starting point for this proposal was the four functions of organizational goals suggested by Barney and Griffin (1992): 1) provide guidance and unified direction; 2) facilitate planning; 3) motivate and inspire employees; and 4) aiding evaluation and control. Jacobsson and Pousette concluded that functions 1, 2 and 4 were, to a large extent, covered by the applications of MBO in human service organizations, (e.g., Svenska kommunförbundet, 1991). However, the motivational aspects of goal setting (3) as was focused in, for instance, 'goal setting theory' (Latham & Locke, 1979), was missing in practice. Employees did not appear particularly inspired by the official goals or sub-goals of their work units as they were expressed in the organizational plans (Jacobsson &

Pousette, 1994). This observation led Jacobsson and Pousette to suggest an integration of the strategic MBO and a MBO model adjusted for operative work.

Inspired by Erez (1977), the operative MBO model was based on the three parts, 'planning', 'acting' and 'evaluating', in a rather short-term cyclic process. The model stressed the importance of differentiating the internal from the external perspectives on operative work with regard to feedback and evaluation. The evaluation that takes place in the operative MBO is what Eriksson and Karlsson (1990) called evaluation in work, and the evaluation in strategic MBO is an evaluation of work. The former is a more "private" and regular evaluation with respect to higher management levels, and the latter is a more "official" and seldom occurring evaluation. These two evaluation types must be fairly separated from each other. The evaluation in work has its focus more on improvement, allowing learning and making mistakes, and the evaluation of work is focused on satisfying managers' and politicians' needs for control over that work is carried out in the settled direction. To a certain degree, different measures are involved in the two evaluation types because professionals need more complex measures to satisfy their needs compared to politicians.

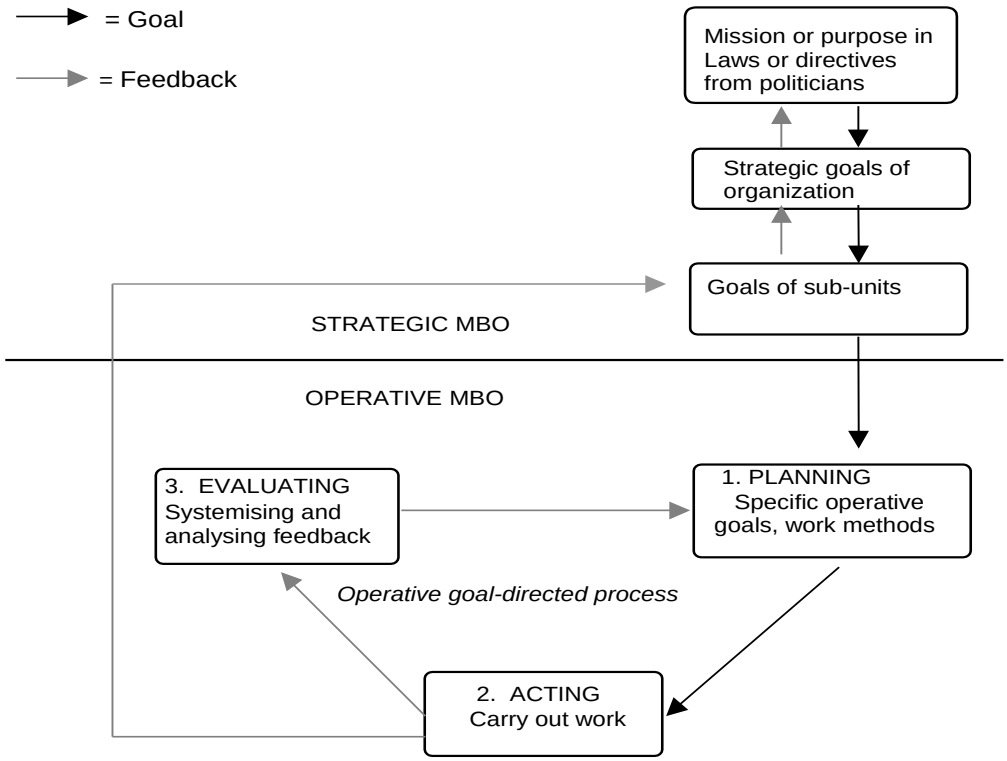
= Goal
= Feedback
Mission or purpose in Laws or directives from politicians
Strategic goals of organization
Goals of sub-units
STRATEGIC MBO
OPERATIVE MBO
3. EVALUATING Systemising and analysing feedback
1. PLANNING Specific operative goals, work methods
Operative goal-directed process
2. ACTING Carry out work

Figure 1. Management by objectives in human service organizations = strategic MBO + operative MBO, adapted from Jacobsson and Pousette (1994).

In summary, the relationship between strategy formulation and organizational performance seems evident. There is, however, a lack of knowledge on the pattern of relationships between strategy formulation, content, implementation and lastly organizational performance. A gap between strategy formulation by executives and its implementation in operative work has been indicated by research. Partly with the purpose to reduce this gap and enhance coordination, management teams have been established in many modern organizations.

Management Teams as a Strategic Resource

Top management teams have been looked upon as a crucial strategic resource, as several studies (e.g., Astley & Van den Ven, 1983; Smith & Smith, 1994), have concluded that they have a significant impact on organizational performance. Further, several researchers (Adizes, 1981; Ancona & Nadler, 1989; Hambrick, 1987) have lent support to the notion that executive teams have an advantage over individuals, especially in leading and coordinating complex organizations with diverse but interdependent subunits. For example, an experimental study by Korsgaard, Schweiger and Sapienze (1995) showed several benefits of allowing team-members to influence strategic decision. Above all, decision quality was better, the decision was perceived as more fair, team-members were more committed to its implementation, trust in the leadership increased and members identified more with the group. The potential advantages of management teams reported in research has been summarized by Yukl (1998) as:

- a management team has the potential to make better strategic decisions when members have relevant skills and knowledge that the CEO lacks.
- team-members can compensate for weaknesses in the skills of the CEO.
- the decisions made by a team are more likely to represent the diverse interests of organization members.
- important tasks are less likely to be neglected if several people are available to share the burden of the leadership.
- communication and cooperation among managers from different subunits is improved by meeting regularly as a team.
- the participation of team-members in making strategic decisions will improve their understanding and commitment to implementing these decisions.

Different Views on Management Teams

Management teams are not only all managers at a certain level. Mattsson (1990) defined a management team as "a number of managerial persons from a unit, including its leader, which by working in group-form in a planned way intend to make the leadership of the unit more effective" (p. 243). His definition is congruent with many others (e.g., Eisenhardt, Kahwajy, & Bourgeois, 1997a). According to Mattsson (1990) a management team is a complement to individual leadership, not a collective leadership executed by a team. This definition is contrasted by Katzenbach's (1997) definition of 'real teams', "a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and an approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable" (p. 84).

The Tasks of Management Teams

Ten years ago Mattsson (1990) noticed a growing establishment of management teams in Sweden, implying the top manager's transference from individual contacts with subordinated executives to group meetings, where organizational goals and strategies became common affairs. Also in an international context, focus on management groups is a relatively young phenomenon; Hambrick (1997), for example, dated the entrance of the term 'top management team' in the early 80's. Today, most organizations rely on the members of their management teams to shape and maintain important aspects of the organization (Yukl, 1998). Management teams exist at different hierarchical levels and may be formed in different ways; all or just some of the direct reporting managers as well as all or some of the staff executives, e.g. the human resource manager, the chief financial officer or the R&D manager.

Hambrick and Mason (1984) identified the main task of the top management team as formulating and implementing the organization's strategy, and suggested that management teams rather than CEOs should be the unit of analysis when trying to understand the strategic behavior of organizations. More concrete, the work of the management team is described as fact finding, analysis and problem solving by Hambrick (1997). Mattsson (1990), in his study of Swedish management teams, found that their aims could be classified into spreading information, decision-making, developmental and strategic work, creating harmony between the members and individual development. Though the team-members' primary *desired* aim was developmental and strategic work, their primary *actual* function was spreading of information and the management groups were often caught with short-term issues.

Regarding problem solving and decision-making, Huber (1980) clarified the difference between programmed and non-programmed decisions, the former being

routine decision and the latter being infrequent decision where no decision rules are applicable. Knight (1965) distinguished between decisions that are certain (only one outcome), risky (several but known outcomes) and uncertain (several and unknown outcomes). In addition, new decisions are often influenced by the results of previous decisions (Gärling, Karlsson, Romanus, & Selart, 1997). Applied to the organizational hierarchy, top management often must handle non-programmed and uncertain decisions, while lower management addresses more programmed and certain decisions according to Barney and Griffin (1992).

Problems in Management Teams

By interviewing CEOs about the critical challenges of top management teams, Hambrick (1995) identified five major problems that hampered the interaction between team-members: 'problem' executives, common team-wide shortcomings, harmful rivalries, groupthink and fragmentation. Hambrick saw fragmentation as a symptom of a non-team, i.e., a mere constellation of senior executives. Frequent non-team behavior among executives has also been noted by Drucker (Verespej, 1998), who 25 years ago suggested that management should operate as a team, and by Katzenbach (1997), who argued that management teams are seldom 'real teams'.

Amason *et al*. (1995) found in an interview study that managing conflicts was the main crux of team effectiveness and, like many other writers, identified two types of conflicts: the cognitive conflict, improving effectiveness, and the affective conflict, detrimental to teams. When conflicts remain task-oriented, not only does decision quality improve but so do team-member commitment and satisfaction (Amason, 1996). However, occasionally management teams must face a dilemma: a choice between higher quality decisions that cannot be implemented, versus implementing lower quality decisions (Amason & Sapienza, 1997). Eisenhardt, Kahwajy and Bourgeois (1997b), by observing strategic decision making in top management teams, concluded that "teams engaged in healthy conflict over issues not only made better decisions but moved more quickly as well" (p. 85).

In summary, research implies that particularly human services, as complex organizations, would benefit from strategic planning, but also that rather few of these organizations adopt it. Moreover, a lack has been noted of research that follows the strategic process from formulation to implementation. Management teams have increased in popularity during the last 20 years and are today reckoned as a natural strategic resource. Above all, researchers have reported advantages in better decision quality and commitment among managers to implement these decisions. However, research has also noted a perceived lack of long-term strategic issues on behalf of short-term issues and spreading of information. The tasks for top

managers and their teams are not only to formulate strategies, but also to shape the structure of the organizations.

Management by Structure

The structure of an organization is similar to what the skeleton is to the body. It defines the form and function of the organization's activities with the purpose of influencing the organizational behavior of the employees (e.g., Barney & Griffin, 1992; Van Fleet, 1991). The structure answers certain questions for people working in the organization: what am I supposed to do, with whom do I cooperate, to whom do I report and to whom do I go if I have a problem? Although evidence of various hypotheses remains, the overall message from conducted research as well as a basic assumption among both organizational scientists and practitioners is that the way an organization is formally structured has a systematic and powerful effect on several measurable output variables, such as productivity (Barney & Griffin, 1992; Cummings & Worley, 1997; Furnham, 1997).

Perhaps as a consequence of the general knowledge about the organizational structure's influence on organizational performance, structure and organizational design has also become a field for "organizational fashion", (Jacobsen & Thorsvik, 1998; Mintzberg, 1981). Jacobsen and Thorsvik (1998) suggested that this is particularly common in service producing organizations in which the products are immaterial, as in many human services. They argued that there is often a focus on the formal structure and staffing instead of performance, mainly because of difficulties to apprehend what is accomplished. For instance, the managers of a human service organization may announce a change from bureaucratic structure to management by objectives as a way of telling stakeholders that the organization has become flexible and goal directed. The structure becomes a part of the marketing of the organization; work is carried out in "the right way".

The structuring of an organization involves several different processes, according to Furnham (1997):

- allocating tasks and responsibilities to individuals (e.g. how much choice they have about how they work)
- specifying and defining jobs with descriptions and key result targets
- designing the formal reporting relationships throughout the organization
- deciding the number of levels in the hierarchy (tall versus flat)

- deciding on the span of control of each supervisor and manager (i.e., the number of people reporting to a manager)

These processes are connected and interdependent of each other. From a more abstract position than Furnham, Mintzberg (1979) describes the structuring of an organization as composed of two fundamental and opposing requirements, the division of work into various tasks to be performed and the coordination of these tasks in order to accomplish the work: "The structure of an organization can be defined simply as the sum total of the ways in which it divides its labor into distinct tasks and then achieves coordination among them" (p. 2).

Division of Work

The economical advantages of division of labor has been a matter of course since the days of Adam Smith and his book "The wealth of Nations" in 1776 (Barney & Griffin, 1992). However, economy is not the only reason for dividing the overall task of an organization; complexity is another. Many modern organizations, especially human services, are complex and knowledge intensive, which implies that no single person is able to carry out all tasks. Instead, many of the tasks are highly specialized, not only into different occupations and professions but also into sub-specialties within each profession. Jobs can be specialized in two dimensions, horizontal and vertical. According to Mintzberg (1979), horizontal job specialization is about the scope or broadness of the job, i.e., how many different operations the job includes. The vertical job specialization, on the other hand, is primarily about the amount of control and decision authority exercised by the worker. These two dimensions are covered in Litterer's 'Basic work control cycle', shown in Figure 2.

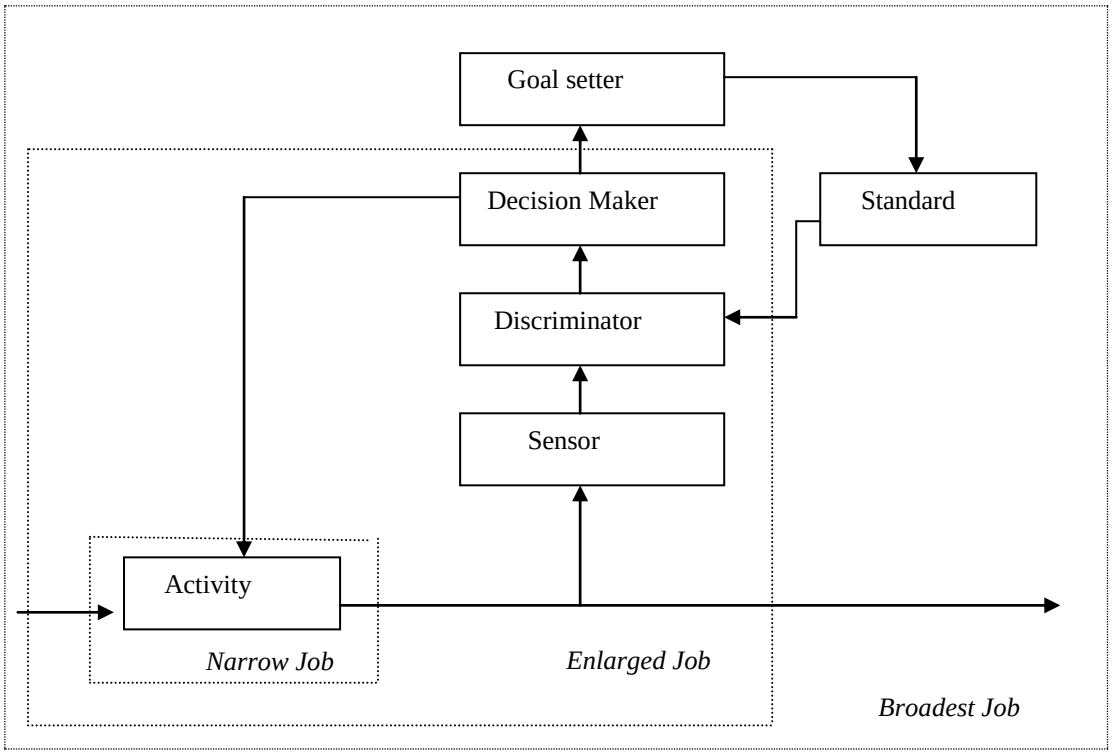

Figure 2. "Basic work control cycle" (Litterer, 1965) adapted by Mintzberg (1979).

Figure 2 consists of a first and a second order 'feedback loop', with the actual performance of an activity at the bottom left and its administration (the feedback and control system) above at the right. Narrow jobs do not include a feedback loop, enlarged jobs a first order loop and broadest jobs include also a second order feedback loop with a possibility of changing the goals for the activity. A vertically specialized job includes only the job's activity, and as it becomes vertically enlarged the worker gains more control over decisions and goals, and standards guiding these decisions. An example of job enlargement is operators on an assembly line with an extended work cycle (more different operations) and taking care of quality control themselves, but others set goals and standards for quality and quantity. The broadest jobs also include setting the goals for *what* should be accomplished and making the standard to which the result can be compared.

Mintzberg (1979) claims that vertical and horizontal specialization often goes hand in hand – jobs often must be specialized vertically because they are specialized horizontally. There are exceptions, however; he notes that many 'professionals' (e.g. physicians, lawyers or psychologists) are horizontally specialized but exercise a great deal of control over their activity, or in other words are not vertically specialized. This design of tasks is particularly present in human services with its many professionals. Their specialized training for the profession, commitment to a set of ethics, and connectedness to a specific professional organization with legitimate possibility of scrutiny, aims at guiding the professionals' decisions on the

content of ‘goals’ and ‘standards’ in Figure 2. This circumstance brings about considerable professional autonomy at the cost of manager control, and is a major ingredient behind descriptions of human services as ‘loosely coupled systems’ (Weick, 1976).

The horizontal job specialization appears, however, more complicated in human service work than Mintzberg suggests; there is a difference between the external and internal perspectives on job specialization in, for instance, the surgeon’s tasks. To be a highly specialized expert on a particularly narrow part of the body requires a very broad knowledge of the rest of the body, and as the knowledge on this narrow part grow it is probably experienced as a broader activity than before. From the internal perspective of professionals, their activities appear very broad, but from the external ‘novice’ perspective seem narrow due to the lack of knowledge of the complexity involved.

Regardless of the broadness or narrowness of different tasks, they must usually be chained together with other tasks if the joint effort of different workers shall serve the organizational goals. This integration or coordination of work is the second requirement when creating an organizational structure, and is opposed to the division of tasks, according to Mintzberg (1979).

Coordination of Work

One of the major problems faced especially by larger organizations is the lack of integration and coordination among the different parts of the organization (Schein, 1988). There are many ways to coordinate work within an organization; one is to group certain tasks together in the organization. Furnham (1997) identified four ways to do this: 1) by project (e.g., teams); 2) by function (e.g., psychologist unit); 3) by customer/client needs (e.g., occupational health center) and 4) by geographical territory or location (e.g., primary health care center). Another way, the most fundamental according to Schein (1988), is to create a hierarchy of authority within the organization. Managers and management teams are usually appointed the mission to facilitate coordination. A third way is the creation of standard operating procedures, as in the Weberian model of bureaucracy (e.g. Hasenfeld, 1983). Mintzberg (1979) has suggested a typology of different ways to coordinate and structure work, which is presented next.

Mintzberg's Typology of Coordination and Structure

Partly inspired by the conclusions of Simon (1957), March and Simon (1958) and Galbraith (1973), Mintzberg (1979) suggested a typology of five coordinating mechanisms operating in organizations. Three are "standardized" mechanisms, by which coordination is achieved by predetermined standards for the work. The standardization often involves people other than the worker (e.g., analysts, managers or teachers).

- *Mutual adjustment* - coordination of work is made possible by the simple process of informal communication.
- *Direct supervision* - coordination is achieved by having one individual taking responsibility for the work of others.
- *Standardization of work processes* - coordination is made possible by having the content of the work specified in rules or routines to be followed.
- *Standardization of outputs* - coordination is obtained by the communication and clarification of expected results.
- *Standardization of skills and knowledge* - coordination is reached by specified and standardized training and education for a profession.

Mintzberg (1979) argued that the structure of organizations by essence appears in five different configurations. According to him, there are no good or bad structures,

the fit between the structure, the products or services and characteristics of the environment determine whether the organizational structure is appropriate or not. The most important characteristics of the environment are whether it is stable or dynamic and simple or complex. *Stability* means that the environment using the products or services is predictable; dynamic environments lead to uncertainty. *Complexity* means that the environment leads to requirement of sophisticated knowledge about clients or products – if the knowledge can be rationalized, the environment is simple. Mintzberg suggested the following five configurations, accompanied by their typical coordinating mechanisms.

- *Simple Structure* - characterized by little complexity and formality but at the same time a high centralization of power. This structure works for organizations in simple but dynamic environments and is typical in young and small organizations; the main coordinating mechanism is *direct supervision*.
- *Machine Bureaucracy* - characterized by little complexity but a high formality and centralization of power. This structure works for organizations in simple and stable environments, typically old and large organizations. Work is mainly coordinated by *standardization of work processes*.
- *Divisionalized Form* - characterized by several semi-autonomous subunits that may have the structures of, for instance, the machine or the professional bureaucracy. In industry, power is often centralized to top managers of the subunits. This structure works best in relatively simple and stable environments, sometimes with diversified markets. The organizations are typically old and very large and the work is mainly coordinated by *standardization of outputs*.
- *Professional Bureaucracy* - characterized by skilled and specialized workers with substantial autonomy and decentralization of power. This structure works best in a complex but stable environment. Many human services such as hospitals, social services and schools share this organizational form. The organizations are of various age and size, and work is mainly coordinated by *standardization of skills and knowledge*.
- *Adhocracy* - characterized by specialized autonomous professionals working with different aspects of a project. This structure works best in complex and dynamic environments. The organizations are usually found in young organizations and the work is mainly coordinated by *mutual adjustment*.

In Mintzberg's (1979) typology, the main coordinating mechanism is stressed. However, recent research implies that a combination of several coordinating mechanisms is needed in the human services. For instance, inter-professional collaboration (i.e., 'mutual adjustment' and 'standardization of skills and knowl-

edge') in human services has been widely emphasized by researchers (Abrahamson & Mizrahi, 1996; Brooks & Gerstein, 1990; Flaherty, Garison, & Waxman, 1998; Mawhinney & Smrekar, 1996; Netting & Williams, 1996), likely as a result of the shortcomings of standardization of skills and knowledge as the "one and only" coordinating mechanism for professionals. Furthermore, Headrick, Wilcock, and Batalden (1998) suggested that continuing medical education should include continuing professional development in the context of inter-professional collaboration, and that inter-professional teams should focus harder on shared goals around patients' needs. With the vocabulary of Mintzberg (1979), the authors suggested the simultaneous use of standardization of skills and knowledge, standardization of outputs, and mutual adjustment.

In summary, the structuring of an organization requires both division of work into specified tasks and coordination between these tasks. Regarding division of work, many professionals in human services can be described as horizontally but not vertically specialized, i.e., having rather narrow tasks but exercising considerable control. With respect to coordination, many human services can be described as professional bureaucracies that achieve coordination by standardization of skills and knowledge according to Mintzberg (1979). Recent research on, for instance, inter-professional collaboration indicate, however, shortcomings of – too much trust in – this coordinating mechanism as the "one and only". The purpose of creating and maintaining an organizational structure is to influence and regulate the behavior of employees in the organization. The last section of this introduction addresses the topic of "managing individual behavior".

Managing Individual Behavior

The task is an entry door into organizational life for individuals. This is the intersection between the managers, as representatives of the organization, and the individual worker. By way of different tasks, individuals or groups take over a part of the overall organizational goals (Frese & Zapf, 1994). Inspired by Hackman (1970), Frese and Zapf (1994) describe the redefinition process of changing from an external to internal task (Figure 3).

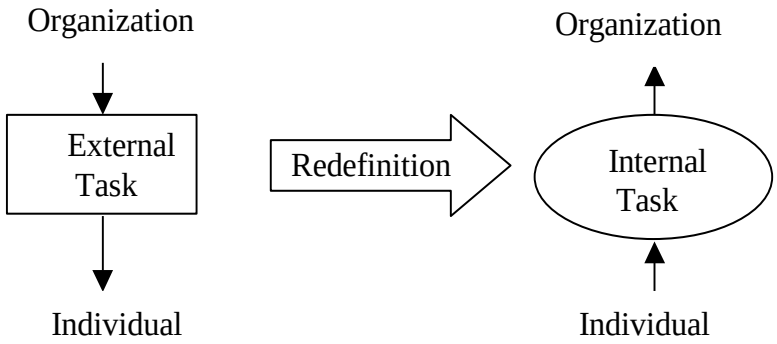

Figure 3. Redefinition from external to internal task.

The external task is presented by the organization, for instance by a written job description, though sometimes in a very general manner. The result of an external task must be anticipated as a goal – what shall I accomplish? And the conditions for its execution need consideration – how shall I do it? The understanding and interpretation of the external task in transforming it to an internal task is a redefinition process built on, for instance, prior knowledge, values, clarity of task, acceptance and willingness to carry out the task (Frese & Zapf, 1994). Thus, one external task presented to two people becomes two partly different internal tasks by the redefinition process.

Many characteristics of human service organizations, presented earlier, are reflected in the characteristics of individuals' tasks. However, these characteristics are salient in different extensions because, for instance, individuals interpret their tasks differently or dissimilar organizations address different client needs. Some of the more general characteristics are described below, and later aspects closely related to self-management (goals, feedback and control) when carrying out the tasks are more thoroughly presented.

Characteristics of Tasks

The most obvious characteristic of 'people changing' tasks is that the work process involves other human beings – the clients – which implies a potential uncertainty about work results from the employee perspective. Uncertainty about task performance is the essence of the constructs (lack of) role clarity or role ambiguity, also a part of the role stress concept (e.g., Burke & Scalzi, 1988; Quick, 1979; Um & Harrison, 1998). The degree of role ambiguity among human service workers varies, but the general level is probably higher in human services than in organizations with clearer goals (Söderfeldt & Söderfeldt, 1997). Relating to

'internal task' in Figure 3, people with the same external task have internalised it with different degrees of clarity. Role ambiguity occurs, according to Miner (1992), when role-related information (e.g., what is the goal and how can it be accomplished) is lacking and/or is not clearly communicated. Role ambiguity is, for instance, a strong predictor of job dissatisfaction (Abramis, 1994; Glisson & Durick, 1988) and also predicts low organizational commitment among human service workers (Glisson & Durick, 1988; Welsch & LaVan, 1981).

Uncertainty might also contribute to increasing the perceived demands when performing a task. Perceived work demands play an important role in human service work, especially with regard to stress (Cunningham, 1983; Landy, Quick, & Kasl, 1994; Lu, 1999; Xie & Johns, 1995). Closely related to the more general concept of work demands is an aspect related to the clients as 'prosumers'; clients are not always cooperative and client "misbehavior" might invoke fear or stress reactions among human service workers. Schoolteachers are one example: pupils behaving disrespectfully, noisy classes and unmotivated students usually correlate positively and high with stress reactions among teachers (Borg & Riding, 1991; McCormick, 1997; Punch & Tuettemann, 1990).

The needs of clients are defined by a number of actors including clients themselves, human service workers, managers and politicians representing both citizens and clients. Clearly, the different actors' assessments of client needs do not always coincide. A part of the human service workers' tasks is to assimilate the different views on what client needs are, according to what can be morally, legally and economically justified. For the human service worker, this is a 'boundary role' (Hasenfeld, 1983) between the clients on the one hand and the human service organization and the politicians on the other. This role gives the human service worker an influence on the service delivery, but may also be a source of role conflict among human service workers (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991; Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970). An example of this is internal conflicts concerning loyalty towards the organization under economical decline on the one hand, and towards the client and their extensive needs on the other.

Many of the tasks in human service organizations are commonly described as complex (Etzioni, 1964; Hasenfeld, 1992; Palestini, 1998). Complexity means that there are many different and interrelated aspects to consider before or while completing a task. The complexity of a task is connected to the amount of decision necessities as opposed to decision possibilities, the case with the control construct (Frese & Zapf, 1994). Some researchers have claimed that the complexity of a task is independent of a person's experience (Kieras & Polson, 1985), and some that complexity is an interactive term (Frese & Zapf, 1994). Frese and Zapf suggested that the complexity partly decreases over time because of the experience of doing

the task and is partly stable since some tasks always require careful consideration (i.e., many decision necessities). Complexity has an importance with regard to stress regulation. Xie and Johns (1995) concluded after studying work stress among employees with different degrees of complexity in their jobs, that there is an optimum complexity – not too simple and not too complex – to avoid unwanted stress.

Another aspect of inherent strain in the tasks of many human services is their possibility to arouse anxiety. Menzies-Lyth (1984), described the working conditions for nurses at a training hospital. As a consequence of the anxiety-provoking task, several 'social defenses' were inherent in the social system (e.g., patterns of how staff related to patients and to each other). As one way to protect themselves from too much anxiety, a rigid structure was created. Moxnes (1991) has presented similar thoughts on the importance of structure to neutralize anxiety, with particular efficacy for those with a high "need" for structure.

Most of the tasks in human service organizations are described as autonomous, since the interaction between employee and client is seldom monitored and directed by managers (Hasenfeld, 1983; Lipsky, 1980; Weick, 1976). Kerr and Jermier (1978) suggested some characteristics of tasks to be substitutes for leadership (i.e., supporting autonomy). When the task itself provides feedback on performance, the leader's feedback is not needed to obtain knowledge of results. Further, when the task is intrinsically motivating and satisfying, the work itself becomes so enjoyable that there is little need for an inspiring leader. In a study of managers in Swedish human services, Thylefors (1991) reported a relative absence of task oriented directive leadership styles in favor of the more relation oriented supportive styles. Further, if the managers had to 'direct' subordinates, the managers often apprehended them as a problem. However, in order to be autonomous and self-managed there are some prerequisites, affecting the success of self-management.

Prerequisites for Self-Management

Self-management in the meaning of self-regulation is defined as the ways in which people control and direct their own actions (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). The main requisites for guiding the direction are *goals* and *feedback*, which along with *control* are the three main constructs with regard to self-regulation. These aspects of self-regulation at work are included in 'Action theory'(Frese & Zapf, 1994) and in the 'Control theory' (Carver & Scheier, 1982; Carver & Scheier, 1998). The concepts are also found in the 'MBO model' (Figure 1, p. 11) and in 'Basic work control cycle' (Figure 2, p. 16).

Goals

Upon reviewing nearly 700 psychology articles concerning goals, Austin and Vancouver (1996) suggested that goals are "internal representations of desired states, where states are broadly construed as outcomes, events or processes" (p. 338). The authors noted that most researchers understand goals as organized in hierarchies. In order to attain a super-ordinate goal (e.g., write a doctoral thesis), sub-goals and sub-sub-goals (e.g., learn statistics) must be reached. Sub-goals are ways or means to reach super-goals. Austin and Vancouver identified six common factors in the literature with regard to goal dimensionality:

- *importance/commitment* – how important the goal is and how long a person is willing to strive for it.
- *difficulty level* – the level of a goal on a performance scale; how hard it is to reach.
- *specificity representation* – how clear and specific the goal is.
- *temporal range* – the amount of time there is before the goal can be reached.
- *level of consciousness* – some goals are accessible for consciousness and some are not.
- *connectedness/complexity* – goals are connected to each other in a goal-hierarchy – the more connections to other goals at different levels, the more complex the goal.

Frese and Zapf (1994) contribute with two additional dimensions in their goal review:

- *process versus end-state goals* – process goals is related to the action itself, standards to be maintained (e.g., always being nice) and end-state goals are reached and then left (e.g., receive a driving license).
- *efficiency divergence of sub-goals* – some sub-goals have higher likelihood to serve the reaching of higher ordered goals. This is especially important when making plans and the way to reach the end-state goal is not known, e.g. choose a broad and general education if one is not sure of the preferred future job.

Goals are important for individual behavior, particularly with regard to performance motivation and health related issues such as stress and burnout. In Terpstra and Rozell's (1994) study of organizational level performance, a positive relationship between the use of goal setting and private companies' profitability were found. Regarding individuals, Locke's 'goal setting theory' is the most empirically studied (Latham & Locke, 1979; Locke & Latham, 1990; Locke, Shaw,

Saari, & Latham, 1981), and above all the relationship between clear and difficult (but realistic) goals on the one hand, and performance on the other. For instance, Locke and colleagues (Locke *et al*., 1981) found in a review of goal setting studies that the median performance was improved by 17% with specific and difficult goals in contrast to "do your best" (i.e., vague) goals. However, this conclusion seems true for rather simple jobs and not the more complex ones, such as many human service jobs. For instance, Yearta, Maitlis and Briner (1995) conducted a "Lockean" goal setting study among professionals (scientists) and the positive linear relationship between goal difficulty and performance was not replicated. The research on the topic suggests that setting difficult goals when the task is complex has a very small (if any) effect on performance (Earley, Lee, & Hanson, 1990; Mone & Shalley, 1995; Wood, Mento, & Locke, 1987). Mone and Shalley (1995) even found that "do your best" goals led to a somewhat higher performance than did specific difficult goals when tasks were complex.

Another limitation of the validity or utility of goal setting theory in human service organizations, besides complexity, is the relative absence of clear end-state goals. Most of the behavior is better characterized as attempts to attain process goals – there are standards to live up to and maintain day after day. These process goals or standards naturally might be characterised in the same way as end-state goals, for instance as clearly and challengingly expressed by the manager (Bogotch, Williams, & Hale, 1995). Yet another important goal dimension in human services is the temporal range. Many end-state goals are to be reached in a distant future, for instance changing a criminal drug addict into a fairly well adjusted citizen.

With regard to health and stress related issues, clear goals seem to play an important role in human service work as well as in other jobs. Clear goals are, according to numerous studies, associated with a lower stress-level than are unclear goals among human service workers (Burke & Scalzi, 1988; Elovainio & Kivimaeki, 1996; Hamann, Daugherty, & Mills, 1987).

Feedback

Feedback is defined as performance-related information available to individuals in work settings; it is information about how far one has progressed toward the goal (Frese & Zapf, 1994). The comparison of feedback with the goal generates knowledge of results, which is necessary for progress such as learning and performance improvement (e.g., Annett, 1969).

Feedback emanates from different sources in the work environment. According to Ilgen, Fisher and Taylor (1979), sources of feedback can be classified into three

categories. These are other individuals that evaluate the employee's behavior, the task environment (the job itself) and finally the individuals' self-judgement of their performance. Herold, Liden and Leatherwood (1987) identified five major sources of feedback and found that the most frequent was individuals' self-judgement, followed (in the order mentioned) by task environment, immediate supervisor, co-workers and the organizational management. Thus, employees tend to rely on feedback sources close to their own task in the organization. In human service organizations, clients react on and participate in the service delivery (the task environment) and feed back information to the human service worker. Clients should therefore be both an immediate, frequent and important source of feedback.

Feedback can be positive (communicating doing a good job) or negative (communicating criticism about work performance). Herold and Greller (1977) showed that this distinction is important, as positive and negative feedback are not end points on the same dimension. Instead, positive and negative feedback appear to be fairly independent factors and should be assessed independently from each other (Herold & Parsons, 1985). Ilgen *et al.* (1979) concluded that positive feedback is generally more accurately perceived than negative feedback. The reason for this is that negative feedback may be denied by the recipient because of unwillingness to accept this knowledge. Dörner (1989, in Freze and Zapf, 1994) found that people who interpreted criticism in a less realistic and self-serving manner showed lower performance than did those with more realistic interpretations of negative feedback. When feedback is interpreted within a framework of keeping up the self-concept instead of dealing with the problem, actions are less effective.

The sign of feedback also affects the behavior and feelings of superiors when giving feedback to their subordinates. Supervisors often distort the message by making the ratings less negative for poor performers, anticipating that workers perceive negative feedback as unpleasant and believing that subordinates like them less when giving negative feedback (Fisher, 1979; Waung & Highhause, 1997). Waung and Highhause (1997) conclude that fear of interpersonal conflict is a major reason for supervisors to be restrictive in giving negative feedback to subordinates.

Besides the relationship between feedback and performance, some research suggests that feedback is important with regard to stress. Feedback is often used in combination with goal setting in stress management (Adams, 1989; Cooper & Cartwright, 1994). Further, a relationship between feedback and role ambiguity has been found in a number of studies (Herold, Liden & Leatherwood, 1987, Peiro, Gonzáles-Romá and Lloret, 1994; Sawyer, 1992; Teas, 1983; Vredenburgh and Trinkaus, 1983). The feedback sign has, however, often been neglected in stress research. One exception is a study by Russell, Altmaier and Van Velzen (1987),

showing that teachers who received more positive feedback were also less vulnerable to burnout.

Control

In theories built on the assumption about self-regulation of human behavior (e.g., Carver & Scheier, 1982; Frese & Zapf, 1994), control is an overall concept describing the quality of the self-regulation or autonomy of individuals. "Control at work implies a certain amount of autonomy with regard to the sequence, time frame, and content of work goals; work plans; the conditions of feedback; and the condition of work … Not having control implies that the goals and plans of work are outside the person working" (Frese & Zapf, 1994, p. 295). Regarding cybernetic theory and the 'negative feedback loop' (e.g., Carver & Scheier, 1982), high control is similar to a small difference between reference value (i.e., goal) and input function (i.e., perception of feedback on behavior). In other words, our actions had the effect that we intended. Thus, a goal-oriented definition of control implies that only intended events are controlled; actions that lead to accidental success or unwanted events imply that the individual lacks control (Frese & Zapf, 1994). On the other hand, the absence of a goal implies that control is not an issue because nothing has to be controlled. In daily speech, control is also a term used to express that an individual holds an orientation about actual events. However, this aspect is just one prerequisite for having control in the sense used in work psychology, where control also means the ability to influence oneself or others. Frese and Zapf (1994) have suggested that the level of control (i.e., level of regulation) is related to the level of the goal in a goal hierarchy. A high amount of control at work might allow a person to define the general goal of the work itself (e.g., what shall I accomplish), while lower levels of control only allow the person to define lower sub-goals (e.g., when to take a break).

Some distinctions concerning control have been made. Locus of Control – LOC – (Rotter, 1966) distinguishes how people perceive and locate control in their lives, internally or externally. Individuals with external LOC attribute events to forces beyond their control (Adeyemi-Bello, 1993). High levels of internal LOC, in comparison to external LOC, have shown to be associated with higher levels of performance, job satisfaction and lower levels of stress (Spector, 1986). Related to this is the distinction between subjective (perceived) and 'objective' control, where objective control is described by Frese and Zapf (1994) as restricting forces outside the person, for instance accessible work methods, housing, organizational structure variables such as division of work or prescribed work procedures. The authors

suggested that perceived control is more often larger than objective control in private life than in working life because of the more obvious feedback conditions at work. Finally, Heckhausen and Schultz (1995) distinguished primary from secondary control, where primary control is bringing the environment in line with one's wishes and secondary control is bringing oneself in line with the environment.

Within the stress context, Karasek's model of demand and control (decision latitude) has been widely used (e.g., Johansson, 1994; Karasek, 1989). According to Karasek and Theorell (1990), control is composed of two dimensions: 'skill discretion' and 'task authority'. Skill discretion concerns the scope of the job, variety and absence of routine. Task authority concerns the individuals' autonomy in making decisions affecting their job, their job-related influence within the organization. In comparison with the "basic work control cycle", Figure 2 (p. 16), skill discretion might be interpreted as corresponding to the horizontal dimension and task authority to the vertical dimension in the figure.

Söderfeldt and Söderfeldt (1997) have criticized Karasek's definition of work control for not being applicable in human services to the same extent as in, for instance, manufacturing industries. Their main argument is that there usually exists a high degree of task authority in most human service work regardless of organizational level, so this aspect is not very meaningful to distinguish. The other aspect, skill discretion, is important but more complicated than in non-people work. According to Söderfeldt and Söderfeldt, skill discretion consists of two different aspects, control over work results and control over methods and technologies involved. Control over work results becomes problematic when the task and result are other people. Söderfeldt and Söderfeldt's argument is that the clients have a control of their own, which interferes with the control of the human service worker and limits the utility of Karasek's control concept in human service organizations. This notion implies a possible utility in involving an interpersonal (employee-client) control aspect with regard to human service work.

Summary

There are several indicators to an overall conclusion that human service organizations are more difficult to manage than other types of organizations. The "raw material" consists of other people, with a will of their own. Managers often lack a clear view of the core activity, since this is often carried out in a shielded staff-client relationship. Human service workers are therefore granted considerable autonomy at the cost of manager control. At the same time, there are many stakeholders putting claims on these organizations – what they ought to do and

accomplish – but no one has the sole right to define their purpose. This situation contributes to the formulation of goals that are often vague, conflicting or very extensive, and also to severity with regard to defining effective performance.

Regarding strategic management, research implies that complex organizations (e.g., human services) would benefit from strategic planning, but also that rather few of these organizations adopt it. Management teams have increased in popularity during the last 20 years and are today reckoned as a conventional strategic resource. Above all, researchers have reported advantages such as better decision quality and commitment among managers to implement the decisions. However, research has also noted a perceived lack of long-term strategic issues on behalf of short-term issues and spreading of information.

The structuring of an organization requires both division of work into specified tasks and coordination between these tasks. Regarding division of work, many professionals in human services are horizontally but not vertically specialized, i.e., having rather narrow, specialized tasks, but exercise considerable control over these tasks. Many human services can be regarded as professional bureaucracies that achieve coordination by standardization of skills and knowledge. Recent research on, for instance, inter-professional collaboration indicate, however, shortcomings from too much trust in this coordinating mechanism as the "one and only".

Managing individual behavior in human service organizations starts with the allocation of tasks. These tasks can be generally characterized as potentially ambiguous or unclear, which implies that role clarity is especially desired when human service workers perform their tasks. Further, the tasks can also be described as complex since many actions need careful consideration, and sometimes as anxiety provoking. However, the most common description of tasks in human service organization is that they necessitate autonomous workers. This autonomy or self-management requires goals, feedback and control at work in order for human service workers to navigate and perform well.

The above review of issues related to strategy, structure and individual behavior gives rise to a number of interesting questions regarding Swedish human service organizations. For instance, are management teams a strategic resource in the sense that they are frequently occupied with strategic planning and decision-making? Further, how is work coordinated in a typical human service organization and is there a "best way" to do this? Lastly, what are the functions of goals, feedback and control with respect to human service workers' stress reactions and job satisfaction?

The Present Investigation

Summary of the Studies

General aim

The overall aim of this thesis was to study management in human service organizations with regard to strategy, structure and individual behavior. From an organizational strategy perspective (Study I), the work of management teams in both human service organizations (health care) and other kinds of organizations were examined. From an organizational structure perspective (Study II), coordination of work as perceived by schoolteachers was studied. From an individual behavior perspective (Study III & IV), factors (e.g., goals, feedback and control) with possible affect on stress reactions, feelings of mastery, organizational commitment and job satisfaction were investigated. This individual perspective was applied on the operative work of schoolteachers and a broad spectrum of other human service workers (e.g., social workers, physicians, nurses and psychologists). Table 2 summarizes the four studies with regard to which aspects of management were focused on and characteristics of the included samples.

Table 2
Summary of the studies' focuses and samples

Aspect of management in focus	Study	N organizations or units	N individuals
Strategy	I	28 + 3 management teams from four different industries, including health care	193 + 20 managers
Structure	II	30 schools	994 teachers
Individual behavior	III	Same sample as Study II, but restricted to 27 comprehensive schools	(826 teachers)
	IV	19 units (10 social insurance + 8 social rehabilitation + 1 psychiatric hospital)	604 HSO workers
	Total	80	1811

Study I: Management teams – a matter of compromises

Specific aim

The aim was to explore Swedish management teams mainly with respect to demographic and process aspects, but also regarding aspects of team efficiency. Specifically, four questions were addressed: 1) What do Swedish management teams look like with regard to demography, process and external team characteristics? 2) Are there any industry-differences between management teams? 3) Do teams differ from each other depending on perceived team efficiency? 4) What kind of obstacles do executives report in their management team work?

Method

The study was comprised of two parts, a questionnaire survey and interviews. The sample in the questionnaire study consisted of 193 (69%) responding individuals from 28 management teams. The sample was selected by an invitation to organizations within four industries, regarded as characteristic for their respective industry: human service organizations (university hospital and primary health care), manufacturing industries (car, electronic, engineering and food industry), knowledge intensive service companies (IT and education) and culture/media business (theatre, newspaper, entertainment). Though the teams came from organizations of different sizes they were all running autonomous units of results, either at a level directly under a board or a political committee or one step further down in the organization.

The questionnaire consisted of three parts: (1) 67 items covering team composition (sex, age, professional education etc), aspects of team meetings (meeting frequency, content of meeting agenda etc) and evaluative aspects of their team (perceived team efficiency, organizational success and goal agreement); (2) The *Learning Style Inventory* (Kolb, 1976); and (3) *Leadership Actions Questionnaire* (Johnson & Johnson, 1994).

The interview sample contained six management groups[1] – 44 executives, of which 39 team-members were interviewed (8 females and 31 males). The following industries were represented in the sample: health care (2 teams from a large multidivisional university hospital), manufacturing (3 teams from multinational

[1] Three of the teams were a sub sample of the questionnaire sample. These three teams took part in the interviews as a preparation for "team building" sessions, motivated by a strive for development – not acute problems.

industries) and culture/media (1 team from a newspaper company). *The interviews* were carried through in order to complete the quantitative data with qualitative information on obstacles in the teamwork. *What problems are hampering the work of your management team?* was the core question. The respondent was allowed to freely give her/his opinion on the subject. Follow up questions were only put for clarifications, i.e. a passive interview technique was used.

Results

Most teams were middle sized (8-12 members), half meeting once a week and the others more seldom. The CEO was the chairing person in all but one team, and all but one team followed an agenda at their meetings. A considerable discrepancy between actual and ideal agenda issues was revealed. Above all, there was a desire to concentrate more on strategic and policy issues, even though these issues were quite often attended to. Most obviously, the meetings were opportunities to share information concerning the organization.

The health care teams differed from the others in a number of ways. For instance, fewer hours were spent on meetings compared to manufacturing industry and culture/media. The health care teams also showed a larger openness with regard to secrecy and spreading of reports from the meetings. With respect to meeting issues, health care teams more often used the time for sharing information and discussing economical restrictions than did the other industries. Along with culture/media, health care teams were also less often involved in strategic issues and discussions on common guidelines and policies in comparison with the knowledge and manufacturing industries. Also, a narrower span of decision issues was salient and health care managers perceived their organization as less successful, compared to managers from the manufacturing and culture/media industries.

Teams perceived as effective by their members had, for instance, meetings more frequently, made more decisions in consensus, shared the same goals to a higher degree and were more focused on attaining their goals compared to teams perceived by their members as less effective.

The interviews revealed a number of paradoxes or dilemmas inherent in the work of management teams:

- information overload – insufficient and inadequate information and knowledge
- conflict avoidance and ‘group think’ – demand for critical analysis
- appointed strategy-makers – weighted down with current problems
- managing the whole – responsible for the part

- the ‘dream team’ as an ideal – a group of individuals as a reality

A salient feature, coming from the health care managers, was that the high degree of specialization among the clinics made it impossible to engage oneself in matters concerning other clinics. Along with managers from the manufacturing companies, the health care managers also expressed a resignation with regard to their possibilities to influence long-term strategies. Instead, they were occupied with short-term tactics such as how to handle the board and politicians in order to survive. Another characteristic of the health care management teams was that several clinical directors saw their colleagues in their teams as competitors because they were fighting over the same resources.

Conclusion

The results indicate that Swedish management teams are well structured and formalized, though somewhat large compared to recommendations in literature (Belbin, 1997; Smith & Smith, 1994). Meetings take place in an atmosphere of disciplined reasonability and open conflicts are often avoided. The discrepancy between actual and ideal agenda is obvious. Above all, there is a desire for more challenging tasks such as strategic and policy issues, and to avoid routine questions. The results indicate some characteristics of health care teams in the comparisons with teams from other industries. The health care teams appear to practice a greater openness in relation to the rest of their organizations. These teams are also more of a forum for sharing information but used less as a strategic tool for the organization, as indicated by the lesser frequencies of strategic and policy issues at the meetings.

Study II: Coordinating work in Swedish schools

Specific aim

The aim was to study the practice of coordinating strategies among teachers in Swedish schools. In contrast to Mintzberg’s (1979) term ‘coordinating mechanisms’, the term ‘coordinating strategies’ was chosen in order to emphasize individuals’ activity. These strategies were made operational as different sources of influence on how the daily work was carried out. Specifically, three aspects were studied: (1) the relative importance of different coordinating strategies in the daily

work of teachers with regard to both individual teachers and schools; (2) the relationship between the dominant coordinating strategies and coordination problems in schools; and (3) the relationship between the dominant coordinating strategies and burnout among teachers.

Method

The study was carried out by means of a questionnaire within a Swedish municipally administered school district with 30 schools and covered all 1,129 teachers in the schools, of which 994 (88%) responded to the questionnaire. Twenty-one of the schools were compulsory at both junior and intermediate level, 6 were compulsory at senior level, 2 were upper secondary schools, and 1 was a school for adults. At the junior level all teachers were formally organized in teams. About 30% of the teachers at intermediate, senior, upper secondary and adult levels were regular team-members when the investigation was made. The headmasters introduced the investigation at their schools and the questionnaires were then distributed by the local union representatives to the teachers, who individually sent it back to the researchers.

The questionnaire consisted of 82 questions about work experiences and health issues. Four measurements were used: coordinating strategies (1 question), coordination problems (3 questions), emotional exhaustion (9 questions) (Maslach & Jackson, 1981) and influence on pupils (2 questions). Emotional exhaustion and influence on pupils were used as measurements of burnout. Cronbach's Alpha for coordination problems was .71 and for emotional exhaustion .92. Regarding coordinating strategies, the subjects were asked to prioritize the three most important strategies in their daily work. The strategies were named and made operational as (when different from Mintzberg's concept, the original term is put in brackets):

Mutual adjustment – "We adapt ourselves to one another so that the work goes smoothly"

Following the boss (direct supervision) – "My boss tells me what to do"

Following routines (standardization of work processes) – "There are established routines that I follow in my work"

Striving for goals (standardization of outputs) – "There are goals for what we are going to accomplish together. I contribute with my work in order for us to succeed"

Professional consideration (standardization of skills and knowledge) – "My education and professional training mean that I usually understand what I have to do myself"

Results

The most important coordinating strategy was 'Professional consideration', according to 54.9% of the subjects, followed by 'Striving for goals' (30.2%), 'Mutual adjustment' (11.7%), 'Following routines' (3.0%) and lastly 'Following the boss' (0.2%). Teachers working at the junior level reported 'Striving for goals' and 'Mutual adjustment' as more important strategies, and 'Professional consideration' as less important compared to teachers at the other levels. At the top of the teaching levels, upper secondary teachers reported 'Professional consideration' as more important, and 'Mutual adjustment' and 'Striving for goals' as less important compared with teachers from other levels. For teachers at the adult level compared with those from the other levels, 'Professional consideration' was more important.

Schools with different dominating coordinating strategies were possible to distinguish. For seven of the schools, 'Striving for goals' was the most frequent coordinating strategy among the teachers; for the remaining 23 schools, 'Professional consideration' was most frequent. Differences were shown when the 'Striving for goals' schools were matched with seven 'Professional consideration' schools in a comparison on perceived coordination problems and symptoms of burnout among the teachers. Above all, two-way ANOVAs (individuals x schools primary strategy) showed that the schools dominant coordinating strategy was more important than those of the individual with regard to coordination problems, but not with regard to symptoms of burnout. Coordinating by 'Striving for goals' was better than 'Professional consideration' in both regards.

Conclusion

The extensive use of 'Professional consideration' among teachers is congruent with Mintzberg's (1979) suggestions, and confirms that schools coordinate work mainly by entitling teachers to individual autonomy. However, teachers seem to coordinate their work differently, depending on the teaching level and school at which they work. 'Professional consideration' is not the dominating strategy in all schools; 'Striving for goals' is the most frequent at some. The latter coordinating strategy also appears a better way to coordinate work than by individuals' 'Professional consideration' with regard to avoiding coordination problems at the schools.

Study III: Managing stress and feelings of mastery among Swedish comprehensive school teachers

Specific aim

The aim was to elucidate possible ways to reduce unnecessary stress among Swedish comprehensive school teachers. Based on earlier research, 12 factors were identified and analyzed in multiple regressions with stress reactions (i.e., emotional exhaustion and irritation) and growth (i.e., feelings of mastery) as dependent variables. The stress factors were: colleague support, cooperation, coordination problems, goal clarity, learning orientation, manager support, negative feedback, positive feedback, pupil misbehavior, teacher's age, work control and perceived work demands. Perceived work demand was treated as a dependent variable in an additional regression analysis as well.

Two specific questions were raised: (1) does a relationship between each of the stress factors and the dependent variables exist in Swedish comprehensive schools? and (2) which factors are the more important to recognize and manage in order to reduce stress in Swedish comprehensive schools?

Method

The same questionnaire and sample as in Study II were used. However, only teachers from the 27 comprehensive (compulsory) schools were included in this study. The study covered all 928 teachers in the schools, of which 826 (89%) responded to the questionnaire. Twenty-one were schools that included both junior and intermediate levels, and the remaining 6 were senior level schools.

The statistical analyses of stress factors were preceded by a psychometrical evaluation of the scales. Factor analyses were conducted for independent (the 12 stress factors) and dependent variables separately in order to test or revise the pre-set composition of items in the questionnaire into reliable scales. Sixty-two items were included in this study and the reliability (Cronbach's Alpha) of the measures varied from .70 to .92. The items were adapted from FSF Metod (1998), Pousette & Jacobsson (1999), the "goal clarity" instrument (Sawyer, 1992), the "learning goal orientation" scale (Vandewalle, 1997) and Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). For a complete list of items and response distributions (in Swedish), see Jacobsson and Pousette (1998).

Results

The first analysis concerned the 35 possible relationships (inter-correlations) between independent and dependent variables. Thirty-one correlations were significant and in the predicted direction. Thus, only 4 hypotheses were rejected at this stage (before conducting multiple regression analyses). Cooperation was not related to feelings of mastery, learning orientation was not related to experienced work demands, and teacher's age was not related to either stress reactions or feelings of mastery.

In the regression analyses, 24 of the hypotheses were confirmed; the results are summarized in Table 3 with regard to the directions in the hypotheses and results of the multiple regressions.

Table 3
Summary of hypotheses and results of multiple regressions; minus (-) or plus (+) shows the sign of the predicted relationship in the hypothesis, respectively

Predictor	*Stress reactions* (EE + I)/2		Feelings of mastery		Work demands	
Colleague support	-	$p < .05$	+	$p < .05$	-	# ($p < .05$)
Cooperation	-	n.s.	+	# ($p < .05$)	-	$p < .001$
Coordination problems	+	$p < .01$	-	$p < .05$	+	$p < .001$
Goal clarity	-	$p < .05$	+	$p < .001$	-	n.s.
Learning orientation	-	$p < .001$	+	$p < .001$	-	n.s.
Manager support	-	n.s.	+	n.s.	-	$p < .05$
Negative feedback	+	$p < .001$	-	$p < .01$	+	$p < .01$
Positive feedback	-	$p < .01$	+	$p < .001$	-	$p < .01$
Pupil misbehavior	+	$p < .001$	-	n.s.	+	$p < .001$
Teacher's age	+	n.s.	-	# ($p < .05$)	+	$p < .001$
Work control	-	n.s.	+	$p < .01$	-	$p < .001$
Work demands	+	$p < .001$	-	$p < .001$		

Note: n.s. = not significant; # = the relationship was significant but showed an opposite sign compared with the hypothesis; EE = Emotional exhaustion and I = Irritation

According to the results, the most important stress factors (with regard to stress reactions) were: perceived work demands, pupil misbehavior, negative feedback, learning orientation and coordination problems.

Conclusion

The results indicate that the most important factor to be managed with regard to stress reactions is perceived work demands. Effective ways to decrease experienced demands would possibly be to diminish pupil misbehavior and coordination

problems, enlarge teachers' work control and stimulate cooperation. The second most important factor to be addressed with regard to stress reactions is pupil misbehavior, and is by that a very strong stress factor because of its direct as well as indirect (via increased work demands) importance. Hence, it would be an effective stress management strategy if one succeeds to create and maintain a good working climate in the classroom.

Stimulating the teachers' learning orientation and continuous professional development would likely increase feelings of mastery most effectively. Providing more positive feedback, clarifying the goals in teaching, trying to moderate the perceived demands, as well as providing opportunities to increase teachers' work control would be other effective ways to increase feelings of mastery.

Colleague and manager support did not emerge as important factors for stress management when stress was analyzed in the manner of this study. Thus, general support from colleagues and managers seems to be ineffective stress management intervention among teachers. However, managers and colleagues might have an indirect importance with regard to stress – by helping to moderate work demands, supporting each other to act on pupil misbehavior, giving each other positive feedback and helping each other to clarify the goals.

Study IV: The role of feedback in human service organizations

Specific aim

The aim was to study consequences of positive and negative feedback for role ambiguity, job satisfaction and organizational commitment in human service work. The following questions were addressed:

1) Do sources within and outside the organizational system provide consistent feedback; in other words, is it "one feedback environment"?
2) Does feedback have consequences for human service workers' attitudes towards the job?
3) Does feedback affect work attitudes directly, or is there a mediated, indirect relationship through role ambiguity?
4) Are the consequences for role ambiguity and attitudes towards work the same for positive and negative feedback?

Method

Data were collected from three Swedish human service organizations. The first sample was comprised of 268 employees in 10 local branches of the Swedish Social Insurance Office. The second sample was 115 employees at eight units of a social rehabilitation organization for children and youths with social and psychological problems. The third sample was 788 employees at a psychiatric hospital that cares for patients with a wide spectrum of psychiatric diagnoses.

Questionnaires were administered through the managers to all employees, totally 1,171 individuals, who answered anonymously and mailed the questionnaires to the researchers. The overall response rate was 62%. The response rate was 82% in sample 1 (Social Insurance Office), 70% in sample 2 (Social Rehabilitation Units) and 54% in sample 3 (Psychiatric Hospital). Only those individuals working directly with clients were retained in the sample for analysis. This gave a final sample size of 604 (189 in Sample 1, 80 in Sample 2 and 335 in Sample 3).

Positive and negative *Feedback* were measures with regard to frequencies of different sources (supervisors, co-workers, clients and self). *Role Ambiguity* was measured by a translation of the six-item questionnaire developed by Rizzo, House and Lirtzman (1970), *job satisfaction* and *organizational commitment* was measured by the 'General Work Satisfaction Questionnaire' (Rubenowitz, 1989). Cronbach's Alpha varied from .74 to .86. A Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) approach was used to develop measures of positive and negative feedback, investigate dimensionality of sources of feedback and test alternative models for the relationships between latent variables.

Results

Measurement properties were tested for the feedback constructs using confirmatory factor analyses. The hypothesized two-factor model with two latent variables representing positive and negative feedback was acceptable and the factor structure was stable. Further, positive feedback was negatively related to role ambiguity in all three samples and negative feedback was positively related to role ambiguity in two samples (not in the Social Insurance sample). The relationships between feedback and work attitudes were tested for mediation by role ambiguity. These relationships were completely mediated by role ambiguity. There was no support for direct relationships from feedback to job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Conclusion

The support for a two-factor solution (positive and negative feedback) indicates that feedback within (supervisors and co-workers) and outside (clients) the organizational boundary is perceived as consistent by the HSO-worker. In other words, it is "one feedback environment". The results also indicate that feedback has consequences for human service workers' organizational commitment and job satisfaction, but only if the feedback affects individuals' role ambiguity. Lastly, it seems that positive feedback reduces role ambiguity and that negative feedback contributes to it. However, an alternative explanation to the results is also possible – for instance, role ambiguity might affect the frequency of feedback.

Discussion

The overall aim of this thesis was to study management in human service organizations with regard to strategy, structure and individual behavior. The strategic perspective will be focused on first, by discussing the work of health care management teams as in Study I. A concentration on organizational structure will then be a second step, discussing coordination of work in schools through the results of Study II. The third step will focus on factors affecting individual behavior in the daily work of human service workers, by discussing the results of Studies III and IV. Some general reflections about this thesis will also be presented before the discussion is completed by overall conclusions with regard to the managing of human service organizations.

Management by Strategy

An overall task for management teams in general is to formulate and implement organizational strategies. Study I focused partly on the strategic role of health care management teams in comparisons with management teams from other industries.

The public sector is, by law, supposed to be more open than the private sector. This state of affairs is reflected in the health care management teams, where a more frequent spread of meeting reports and less secrecy was salient compared to teams from the other industries. Further, if the time spent on management team meetings is a sign of the importance team-members attribute to them, then health care teams were given a low priority. Another finding contributing to this "low priority" impression was that health care teams (along with teams from knowledge compa-

nies) held their meetings more seldom if the CEO was absent, compared to teams from the other industries.

Irrespective of industry, a meeting atmosphere of disciplined reasonability emerges from the questionnaire results as well as the interviews. Expressed opinions and viewpoints gain a hearing to a fairly high degree, decisions are "almost always" made in consensus and the perceived goal agreement within the team is relatively high.

The discrepancy between actual and ideal agenda was, however, striking. There was a desire for more challenging tasks, from routine issues to more complicated general questions such as strategies and policies. These latter issues were often on the agenda in general, however somewhat less often among the health care management teams compared to teams from the (private) knowledge and manufacturing industries. This result supports the conclusions made by Stone *et al.* (1999); many non-profit organizations do not adopt formal strategic planning. Further, all management teams wanted to strengthen their strategic role (more strategic issues on the ideal agenda) and those from health care also wanted to give more weight to non-decision areas. This may be a sign of a more participative culture in human service organizations, emphasizing the team as a forum for participation and sharing of information.

The interviews explained and supported findings in the questionnaire results. For instance, the interview results raised a question about the common use of consensus decision. Is this an effect of the awareness of the legitimate source of power in the team (the CEO) rather than a genuine sharing of opinions? Information gained a bit outside the focus of the interviews pointed to a consciousness about the locus of power; the legitimate power of the CEO or superior manager was not questioned and no illusions of a collective leadership were pronounced - quite the opposite. Though compliance and loyalty towards the recognized power at the top were more striking within the private sector; the health care managers expressed more of a loyalty towards their profession and their patients. The clinical directors also showed a more firm conviction than did their private sector colleagues that their employer was dependent on them.

The identified obstacles in the team-members' work were not unique and are mainly the same as documented in other studies (e.g., Hambrick, 1995). Evident in Study I was, however, the paradoxes in the obstacles – sometimes noted by the executives themselves, sometimes not. The solution of one problem may aggravate another. This is, for instance, the case with information overload. Decreasing the load may increase the noticed lack of knowledge about areas outside one's own domains. In addition, teams cannot choose to avoid cognitive conflicts and at the same time have more critical analyses during meetings. Further, team-members

cannot possibly expect a shared responsibility for the whole as long as the executives are held individually accountable for the success of their respective departments. This departmentalization of responsibilities doubtlessly affects the team atmosphere, as noted by both Drucker (Verespej, 1998) and Katzenbach (1997).

The noted rivalry between strategic and operative work was evident in both the interviews and the gap between actual and desired meeting issues. This evokes a question: why do these qualified team-members not succeed to manage their own agenda? The possible answers are several and the interview responses contributed with some clues. Strategies are hardly created without conflicts, and conflicts are seldom confronted. The perceived lack of power in relation to politicians (health care) and international board members (manufacturing) does not seem to stimulate offensive strategy-making. The interviews indicated a rather defensive approach towards politicians and board members. Relevant in this context are also the many "doers" (according to the results of LSI) among the executives; the short-term operative work may have a stronger attraction than the long-term making of strategies, especially in combination with the perceived lack of power, to influence the content of strategies.

According to Jaques' (1976) suggestions, the optimal number of hierarchical levels depends on the time-span required at each stratum: the longer time-span at the top, the more levels. Most of the managers in Study I worked in organizations that followed today's flat ideal, which according to Jaques implies a rather short-term perspective. This circumstance may contribute to the strategy-operative dilemma as the top managers were rather close to the operative work but at the same time expected to formulate strategies, which likely requires a more long-term perspective than they were able to possess.

Management by Structure

The second aspect of managing human service organizations studied in this thesis regards organizational structure. More specifically, the focus was on coordination of the work of schoolteachers.

The frequent use of 'Professional consideration' in Study II supports Mintzberg's (1979) suggestion that professional bureaucracies' coordinate mainly by standardization of skills and knowledge, and confirms that schools coordinate mainly by entitling the professionals' autonomy. Not only the extensive use of 'Professional consideration', but also the absence of 'Following the boss', supports the image of schools as loosely structured (Bidwell, 1965), where teachers are

granted a high amount of decision authority or lack of vertical job specialization (Mintzberg, 1979).

On the other hand, there were also indicators of a tight organizational structure. Inspired by Bidwell (1965), Pang (1998) studied loose and tight coupling forces in schools and suggested goal orientation, communication, consensus and recognition as indicators of tight coupling. These constructs correspond broadly with the coordinating strategies 'Striving for goals' and 'Mutual adjustment'. The frequent choice of the former strategy, and somewhat less frequent choice of the latter, indicate the existence of a tight structure for some teachers.

Different schools could be distinguished with regard to the dominant way of coordinating work among the teachers. At an overall organizational level (the 30 schools), Mintzberg's (1979) model with standardization of skills and knowledge as the dominant mechanism in professional bureaucracies is confirmed, but seven of the schools deviate from this pattern. Swedish schools are, since some years ago, managed by "school plans" (i.e., a MBO approach) for every single school. A plausible explanation for our findings is that the 'Striving for goals' schools had come further with the implementation of their school plans than had the 'professional consideration' schools.

By connecting the mechanisms to their related structural configurations, as suggested by Mintzberg (1979), an impression of schools under reconstruction emerges. The domination of 'Professional consideration' implies that most schools are (still) 'Professional Bureaucracies', but also that the 'Striving for goals' schools have adopted the 'Divisionalized Form', whereby coordination is achieved by standardization of outputs. The latter configuration would be the "modern" school organization, guided by the goal setting in the school plans as the primary coordinating mechanism. This interpretation of the results might also lend support with the fact that an increasing number of schools in Sweden are differentiating themselves from other schools, claiming a 'unique' profile with regard to pedagogical content (e.g., language or an environmental concern). The trend is that a modern school is not just a school, but also a specialized school. From an overall organizational perspective, all the specialized schools can be seen as different divisions taking care of pupils with different interests.

Study II also indicates that some organizational problems depend partly on the favored way of structuring and coordinating work in schools. The results show a relationship between differences in the ways of coordinating work and the frequency of perceived coordination problems in the work setting. Above all, the schools' dominant coordinating strategies contribute more to explaining variations in coordination problems than do the individuals' strategies. This seems logical – it is likely that coordination problems are more affected by the collective way of

coordinating work than by that of each individual. Coordination problems are, above all, failures of the collective and not of the individual.

Mintzberg (1998) claims that professionals are able to coordinate their efforts because of the standardization of their skills and what they are trained to expect from each other. The ongoing change-process in Swedish schools may also affect the traditional job of teachers, moving from solitary work with restricted responsibility for your own class to a greater emphasis on shared responsibility for all pupils and the development of the school. Goals and responsibilities must be quite clear if the 'Professional consideration' strategy is to serve coordination, otherwise it is difficult to know what to expect from others and vice versa. Unclear expectations may contribute to more conflicts between teachers who formerly did not do (but now do) interdependent work. In a changing work context, the 'Striving for goals' strategy might help to elucidate these expectations better than the more solitary and autonomous 'Professional consideration' strategy, and therefore contribute to reducing coordination problems more effectively.

The results in Study II also raise the question whether 'Striving for goals' involves a better stress prevention than 'Professional consideration'. An individual self-management strategy such as 'Professional consideration' may be rather demanding if it is always up to the individual to consider what to do. Thus, 'Striving for goals' might reduce energy consumption by directing the teachers' efforts towards common goals. An interpretation involving the opposite causality is also possible. Teachers experiencing more emotional exhaustion and lower influence on the pupils withdraw from, or are in conflict with, the espoused goals at the work place. With this interpretation, the condition of being more or less burned out affects the choice of coordinating strategy. Future research, with a longitudinal or experimental design, might shed some light on the causality in the relationship between coordinating strategies and burnout.

A possible limitation of the findings in Study II concerns the validity of the way to measure coordinating strategies by only one question. There are two arguments for the validity of the question used in the study. First, the results show a variation of responses within the organization, both between different schools and between teachers working at different teaching levels. Second, when relating coordinating strategies to coordination problems in different schools, the results support the question's ability to discriminate between schools with different frequencies of coordination problems. However, weaknesses likely exist with regard to two response alternatives in the question – for instance, some social desirability in not responding with 'following the boss' or not wanting to see oneself as 'following routines'. The latter strategy was seldom chosen as the most important coordinating strategy, but appeared more frequently as second or third choice. This may be an

expression of a "non-routine" character of work in schools, or of unconsciousness concerning routines among the teachers. Routines are, to some extent, noticed only when they fail to work (Frese & Zapf, 1994). The last interpretation would imply a more dominant role for 'following routines' as a coordinating strategy than is shown in the results of Study II.

Managing Individual Behavior

The third aspect of organizational management in human services concerns a number of factors of relevance for the managing of individual workers' behavior in the operative work. Study III investigates the importance of a large number of factors for stress management among teachers. Study IV examines different models on the relationship between feedback, role ambiguity, job satisfaction and organizational commitment in three human service organizations.

The results in Study III strongly support the idea that work demands, perceived to be made by others as well as the teachers themselves, predict stress reactions among teachers. This was evident with regard to symptoms of emotional exhaustion, where 'perceived work demands' was the single dominating predictor; it was also one of several important predictors of irritation, but played a minor role with respect to feelings of mastery. The additional analysis about predictors of perceived work demands was, above all, answered by pupil misbehavior and coordination problems in the school.

Pupil misbehavior was also an important predictor of stress reactions. This result connects with one of the characteristics of human service organizations, that the "raw material" consists of human beings – "prosumers" (Toffler, 1980). The lack of a good working alliance with pupils has an obvious cost in terms of stress reactions. Strangely enough, pupil misbehavior had no relationship to feelings of mastery. A hypothetical explanation may be that many teachers regard pupils' misbehavior as "beyond their control", a psychological defense against feelings of failure. It is the misbehaving pupils who lack mastering, not the teachers. Thus, pupils' misbehavior may induce stress reactions among teachers because it disturbs the teaching but it does not threaten the teachers' perceptions of being professionally competent – they are mastering their work as they define it.

Manager support did not buffer stress reactions, according to the multiple regression analysis. The moderate to low inter-correlations with stress reactions disappeared in the multiple regressions due to manager support relationships with other independent variables in the analyses. Manager support has often been described as a significant factor for teacher stress (e.g., Borg, 1990), but the results

in Study III suggest that this is not the case. The effect of manager support on stress-related issues is probably mainly indirect: principals might influence teachers' stress management by contributing to a supportive school climate with, for instance, functional coordination, clear goals and generous feedback. Partly because of the wide span of control, principals are too distant from teachers' daily work to have a direct influence on their stress management. Another related aspect explaining the distance between managers and employees is the necessary autonomy of human service workers. As Lipsky (1980) notes, human service jobs are freer from supervisory scrutiny than are most jobs. The nature of human service work is autonomous and cannot be closely supervised without disturbing the work process.

Goal clarity seemed to reduce stress reactions and enhance feelings of mastery. Further, positive and negative feedback showed to be predictors of stress reactions, feelings of mastery and perceived work demands. These results were expected, and confirm the role of goal setting and feedback often claimed in stress management literature (e.g., Adams, 1989; Cooper & Cartwright, 1994). The results also offer a deepened understanding of the importance of the sign of feedback. Positive and negative feedback seem to be fairly opposite constructs in terms of relationships to both stress reactions and feelings of mastery.

Work control did not predict stress reactions, but contributed to more frequent feelings of mastery and buffered experienced work demands. The relationship between work control and stress reactions in the inter-correlations disappeared in the multiple regression analysis because of the common variance between work control and other independent variables. This indicates a more indirect role for work control than postulated in some stress models. For instance, Karasek (1989) argues that control is a critical regulator of stress, along with work demands. Our findings imply that control buffers perceived demands, which regulates stress reactions. However, work control was investigated only in a restricted sense in Study III, corresponding mainly to 'decision authority' (Karasek, 1989) or lack of 'vertical job specialization' (Mintzberg, 1979). The items in the scales concerned, for instance, possibilities to take one's own initiative, participate in school decision-making and decide how to carry out work – not control in relation to the pupils, as suggested to be an important control dimension by Söderfeldt and Söderfeldt (1997). The impact of pupil misbehavior on teacher stress might, however, be interpreted as a support for Söderfeldt and Söderfeldt's arguments about work control as a more complicated construct in human service work than in non-people work – complicated especially because of the relationships between employee and clients.

Study IV was a more thorough investigation of the role of feedback in human service organizations, where feedback was modeled as an antecedent to role ambiguity and attitudes towards work by a structural equation approach. Study IV

shows that positive and negative feedback are important factors to be considered with regard to job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Further, in the regression model predicting role ambiguity it was found that positive and negative feedback had quite different influences on role ambiguity. In fact, the consequences were found to be opposite: Positive feedback reduced role ambiguity and negative feedback contributed to it. These relations are hardly surprising because positive feedback communicates confirmation of the adequacy of existing work methods and goals. On the other hand, negative feedback communicates that performance has been ineffective, and this induces insecurity about the direction and means of work.

The results in Study IV further indicate that feedback affects job satisfaction and organizational commitment indirectly, through the mediating effect of role ambiguity. The presence of an indirect relationship confirms the results reported by Peiro, Gonzáles-Romá and Lloret (1994) and Sawyer (1992). However, the indirect relationship through role ambiguity may also explain associations between feedback and satisfaction in studies based on the job characteristic model of Hackman and Oldham (1980; 1975). The results suggest that role ambiguity should be regarded as an important job characteristic in human service work.

Self-feedback is different from other feedback sources in that it does not emanate from agents within or outside the organizational system. It is an intrinsic process that relies on the workers' own observations compared with an internal framework of references, including work and professionally related standards. So, for self-feedback the worker needs guidance on what is expected from co-workers, management, the profession and policymakers. In other words, workers need role clarity to be able to navigate on their own. To improve the opportunity for self-feedback, there is an apparent need to strengthen the connection between individuals' work and organizational goals. Means for accomplishing such a connection may be the development of evaluation procedures that take into account the complex environment in which the core work process is performed. However, evaluation must be employed in ways that do not harm the substantive goals of the organization or inhibit fair and humane interaction with clients (Karlsson, 1992; Sarri, 1982). One way of doing this may be to implement the integrative model of strategic and operative MBO, suggested by Jacobsson and Pousette (1994).

Do our findings in Study IV suggest that negative feedback should be avoided at work? Criticism appears to interfere with the certainty about what a proper job is, and an increased role ambiguity is an unpleasant experience. But negative feedback does not necessarily induce negative feelings about the job – only when uncertainty (role ambiguity) is induced. Negative feedback may even have favorable effects, as it has been shown to have a significant role in learning and improvement (Waldersee & Luthans, 1994). Negative feedback puts existing work methods in

question and thus has the potential to inspire ideas on how to find more effective ways to perform the job. A necessary condition is, however, that the feedback message is accompanied with guidelines on how to improve. Furthermore, a good working climate is characterized by open communication, and this involves openness also when it comes to criticism; trying to avoid negative feedback likely has an injurious effect on the whole communication climate (Argyris, 1990). The balance between positive and negative feedback should be in favor of positive feedback, which is already the case in the organizations participating in Studies III and IV. In management literature (e.g., Blanchard & Johnson, 1982), the general advice is regularly to recognize personnel doing a good job and, when delivering criticism, to do so without delay and with focus on the task.

Lastly, given the cross-sectional design of the study, it is necessary to be cautious about the nature of the reported relationships. It is shown that feedback has relevance in predicting important work-related variables, but no proof of causal relationships is present – There is a need for longitudinal designs and experimental studies to shed light on the questions of causality. Other threats to this study's conclusions are the possibilities of additional paths and variables affecting the structure. One possibility that cannot be ruled out is that role ambiguity can affect the frequency of feedback, thus implying a reciprocal relationship. It is quite reasonable to suppose that uncertainty about work results triggers a feedback-seeking process (Ashford 1986).

Some Reflections

Beside the issue of cautiousness with causality, a general problem in the four studies, some other methodological or general reflections regarding this thesis might be worth mentioning.

Management as a research field covers a wide spectrum of concepts coming from scientists belonging to different disciplines (e.g., engineering, economy, sociology and psychology). Management is multidisciplinary, which is reflected by the broad perspective covered by the four studies in this thesis. The multidisciplinary nature of management studies may sometimes be an advantage, sometimes a disadvantage. For instance, Mintzberg who has a background in mechanical engineering (Collison, 1991) describes coordinating mechanisms in organizations, a concept difficult to apply for a psychologist with a greater interest in individual actions. Consequently, the concept coordinating strategies was introduced in Study II.

The four studies have been carried out as separate parts, without a greater attention on how they should be linked together in this thesis, the connection between

them was above all based on the authors' research interests. The data has been collected from mid to late 90's: Study I at 1999, Study II and III at 1998 and Study IV between 1994 and 1995. The frequent use of questionnaires is mainly motivated by economical reasons when large samples are involved, but also because they are appropriate for measuring the relationships between fairly permanent characteristics in a work setting (e.g., Johansson, 1994; Wikman, 1991).

One important question is, of course, if the results of the four studies are possible to generalize beyond their specific samples. First, there is a problem with the low response rate, 54%, in the psychiatry sample in Study IV, mainly because of a low, 33%, response rate among the psychiatric assistant nurses – the largest occupational group. This was probably caused by the fact that the group as such felt alienated and threatened due to an ongoing organizational downsizing. All the other occupational groups had a more normal, for Swedish conditions, response rate around 70%. Thus, this sample is not representative for the investigated hospital. All the other samples in the studies had acceptable or good response rates. Second, though difficult to assess, the results of the studies are probably possible to generalize to a fairly high degree in the sense that results are replicated and showing consistency. In Study I, the management teams showed response patterns that were similar to those reported in earlier international research. Likewise was the case in Study II and III, both based on the same survey, concluded to be rather normal Swedish schools when compared to reference data based on earlier surveys with regard to work environment in schools (Jacobsson & Pousette, 1998). Study IV was based on three samples from different human service organizations. However, the main results were replicated in all three samples, which imply a possibility to regard the results as significant to human services in general.

The basic assumption in this thesis is that human services mostly share the features of organizations within other industries. They have, according to Hasenfeld (1983) two distinguishing characteristics: (1) they work directly on people whose attribute they attempt to shape and (2) they are mandated to protect and promote their clients. The high number of professionals, claiming their professional autonomy, has also been a salient feature of human services. However, a general impression, though speculative, is that differences between human services and other organizations have diminished during the last two decades. More and more organizations are producing knowledge intensive service, more organizations are regarded as complex, more enterprises are oriented towards satisfying individual client or customer needs and more occupational groups are claiming a professional status. In Sweden, the public sector monopoly for human services partly has been abandoned and the cost-cutting process has forced human service organizations to a new awareness of results and financial frames. A reflection on Hasenfeld's charac-

teristics of human services says that, today, there is a larger room for interpretation whether an organization could be classified as a human service organization or not.

Human services are still unique in that they are mandated to protect and promote the welfare of the people they serve. They are mandated, but are they able to fulfil their mission? According to a recent report from the Swedish government (Regeringskansliet, 2000), especially human service workers have been exposed to increasing work demands and their sick leave rate (particularly with regard to burnout) has risen remarkably during the latest years. Study III is focusing on the topic of stress management in a large human service organization. The data was collected in 1998 and even though stress was a significant problem then – the size of it has grown essentially in only two years (Regeringskansliet, 2000). In this regard, the levels of stress experiences might be "old data". The practical implications for stress management are probably still relevant, but the problem seems to be bigger in year 2000.

Regarding practical implications, the studied organizations have already received their survey feedback, which has contributed to changes. The most evident example is that of the schools in Study II and III, where a political decision resulted in increased staffing resources, change interventions in several schools and a longitudinal stress prevention program were also started. Thus, the results of the surveys have already met their specific practice, the "recycling" of data in the present thesis hopefully serves as a more general contribution to the established knowledge on managing human service organizations.

Conclusions on Managing Human Service Organizations

The importance of strategic planning is stressed in management literature (e.g., Barney & Griffin, 1992; Yukl, 1998), and research has indicated a relationship to organizational performance, especially when the environment is ambiguous and complex (Miller & Cardinal, 1994). Thus, human service organizations especially would likely benefit from making clear organizational strategies. However, many top managers and management teams in human service organizations do not seem to emphasize strategy-making in practice, at least not in the sense of formal planning (Stone *et al*., 1999). Study I also indicate a perceived lack of strategic issues (i.e., largest difference between reality and ideal) in management teams in general and the health care management teams (along with culture/media) in particular. In the health care teams, a somewhat low priority to organizational management was also given with regard to time spent on team meetings. Operative issues seemed to constitute a certain attraction on behalf of strategic issues. The interviews contrib-

uted to explaining this in the form of paradoxes to be managed. The managers saw themselves as appointed strategy-makers but were occupied mostly with current problems, and were expected to manage the whole but were responsible only for their part of the organization. Another explanation of the perceived lack of strategy-making among health care managers was their power-disadvantage in relation to politicians with regard to long-term issues. It seems plausible to assume that short-term operative issues are important to health care management teams, for instance, in order to spread information and coordinate activities. Appointing these managers as the organizational strategy-makers would only create frustration, if the necessary conditions (e.g., time and political stability) did not exist.

The characterization of human service organizations as loosely structured (Bidwell, 1965; Weick, 1976), where the employees are granted considerable autonomy, is reflected by the results in the studies. In Study I, the members of the health care management teams saw themselves as less dependent on their employer (top manager and politicians) than vice versa. These managers also expressed their loyalty as primarily directed towards the patients. In Study II, the main coordinating strategy in schools was 'professional consideration', corresponding to Mintzberg's (1979) standardization of skills and knowledge and also indicating individuals' autonomy. This autonomy is probably necessary since there is considerable complexity involved in many human service jobs, and many tasks have a confidential nature concerning other people's lives.

However, as Study II indicates (at least with regard to contemporary Swedish schools), it seems more difficult to coordinate the work of teachers who emphasize an autonomous coordinating strategy as 'professional consideration'. 'Striving for goals' seemed a better coordinating strategy with regard to diminishing coordination problems in the organization. A possible explanation to this may be that teachers, as an occupational group, are not yet full 'professionals' – they belong rather to the 'semi-professionals' according to classifications in literature (Etzioni, 1964; Thylefors, 1991). Another explanation concerns the already mentioned change process in Swedish schools, which may contribute to unclear expectations and work roles with regard to cooperation and coordination.

Study II indicates that coordination problems are affected by the dominating coordinating strategy in the schools, and Study III suggests a further chain whereby coordination problems become a predictor of perceived demands (as well as stress reactions) among teachers. This chain, from structure and coordinating strategies to coordination problems and stress reactions, illustrates a significance of organizational structure with regard to workers' well-being.

Work control in the sense of decision authority appeared to play a minor role with regard to stress management in schools (Study III). Human service workers in

general are expected to exercise considerable autonomy (Hasenfeld, 1983; Lipsky, 1980; Weick, 1976). Thus, work control is not expected to be a problem with regard to the vertical dimension of the organizations. However, lately there has been a debate on the importance of empowerment in human services in, for instance, Swedish schools (Vedder & O´Dowd, 1999), as well as schools in other countries (e.g., Rice & Schneider, 1994). One way to enhance empowerment is by participation in organizational decision-making. The reasons why teachers should be empowered by participating in decision-making might be several, e.g. better quality and acceptance of decisions. Teacher stress has also been explained as partly dependent on the lack of participation in school decision-making (McCormick & Solman, 1992; Pahnos, 1990), but the results of Study III suggests otherwise. Expanding teachers' work control in this regard would likely be relatively ineffective as a stress management intervention.

Too much empowerment might even be an exhausting burden, for instance if it makes the work overly complex (Xie & Johns, 1995). Recently, Jacobsson and Pousette (1998) noted some indications of this risk of "over-empowerment" in a report concerning the same sample as in Studies II and III. According to the authors, many teachers expressed that participation in meetings and decision-making take too much time away from classroom issues; one teacher wrote: "Do we really have to participate in everything?" (p. 13). Borrowing the words of Mintzberg (1981), empowerment in this regard is possibly more a 'fashion' than a 'fit', at least with regard to stress management in Swedish schools. Furthermore, Söderfeldt and Söderfeldt (1997) suggested employees' control in relation to clients to be an important dimension in human services. This control aspect was not investigated in any of the studies, but the impact of pupil misbehavior on teacher stress (Study III) indicates that it would be more effective stress management to empower and support teachers in their relationships with pupils than by a general participation in organizational decision-making. Thus, future research based on an elaborated control construct, better fitting human service work, would be of great interest.

The importance of operative goals for the work is a theme present in Studies I, II and III. In Study I, perceived team effectiveness was associated with the emphasizing of goals at team meetings, in Study II 'striving for goals' was a better coordinating strategy than was 'professional consideration' with regard to coordination problems. Further, goal clarity was a predictor of stress reactions and feelings of mastery among teachers in Study III. Thus, goals seem important in many respects for the work in human service organizations. However, the content of the goals often appears to be the result of negotiations and compromises between the interests of politicians, managers, professionals and the clients (Johansson, 1995). For the professionals, there is a risk that they must lower their standards of

quality in service delivery because the official goals do not permit such "exclusive" service as they consider should be delivered. The opposite case is also possible – the official goals of the organization require too much of the professionals. The task must be meaningful and practicable in order to uphold the morale and avoid regressive processes among the professionals (e.g., exaggerated dependency of a strong leader), as noted by Kernberg (1986).

Feedback also seems to be a construct of great importance in human service work, as indicated in Studies III and IV. Study III showed that positive feedback decreased stress reactions and enhanced feelings of mastery, and that negative feedback had the opposite effect. Study IV demonstrated the effect of feedback on job satisfaction and organizational commitment among human service workers as mediated by role ambiguity. The knowledge that positive feedback is desired and negative feedback undesired is somewhat obvious to everyone. However, the two studies give more detailed indications of the significance of feedback in human service work. It has a significant relationship to stress reactions, and it seems that role ambiguity is an important mediator between feedback and attitudes towards work. Further, negative feedback should not be avoided because of a fear of harmful effects on job satisfaction, because this will occur only if employees' role ambiguity is affected. A challenge for managers in human services would be to provide employees with generous positive feedback and give criticism that does not unnecessarily induce role ambiguity among employees.

Finally, in addition to already mentioned suggestions for future research, rather large-scale studies that attempt to attach several levels or perspectives of an organization would be important. In line with earlier suggestions made by Stone *et al.* (1999), there is a lack of research investigating the empirical relationships between organizational strategies and the content, implementation and organizational output related to them. Most research in the area seems to focus on a restricted part of this process, from strategy-making to organizational performance. The suggested research – following the whole process within organizations – would obviously be demanding, but hopefully also rewarding if it contributes to clarifying the relationships between different aspects and parts of an organization.

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